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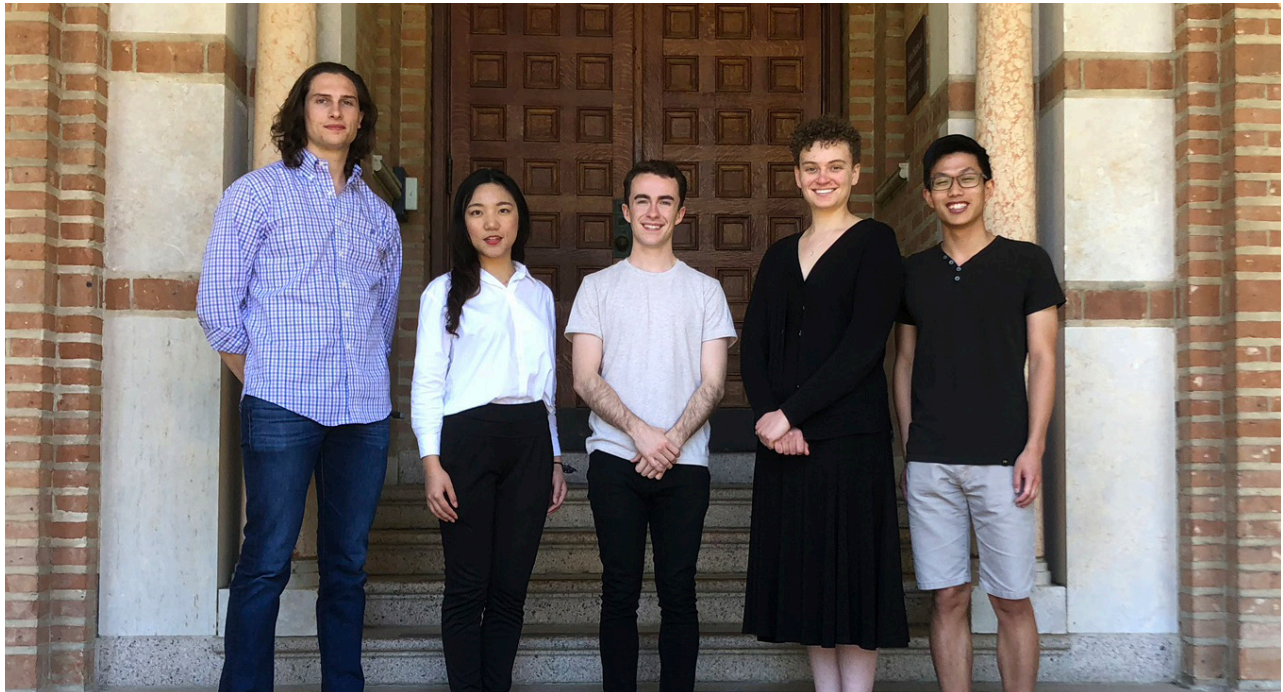
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# ABOUT RICE ASIAN STUDIES REVIEW

Asia in the 21st century is undergoing rapid political, economic, and cultural change. As people, goods, ideas, and cultures reverse colonial flow and begin emanating from Asia across the globe, it is clear that the scholarly lens through which Asia has traditionally been approached by Western-trained academics is sorely in need of revision. **The Rice Asian Studies Review (RASR)**, as an undergraduate Asia-focused academic journal authored, edited, and published by students, situates itself on the front-line of this process by providing a venue for young scholars to exhibit their own ideas and learn from those of their peers. Our goal is produce a compilation of diverse, unconventional, and informed Asian studies perspectives. As authors, editors, and publishers come together in the production of RASR, this fresh cohort of 21st century scholars hopes to promote a dynamic, modern, and interdisciplinary approach to Asian Studies.



From left to right: Jackson Neagli, Connie Zhang, Avery Jordan, Taylor Ginter, and Aaron Huang

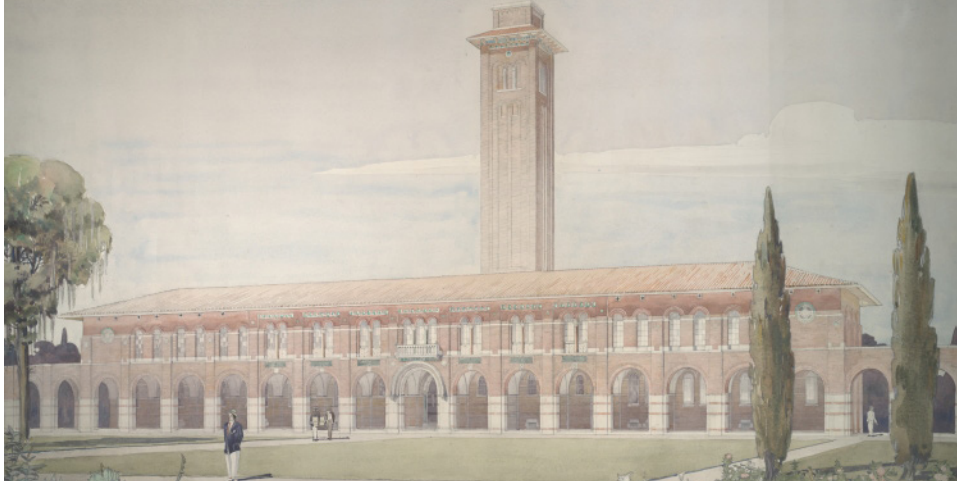
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**Website:** [rasr.rice.edu](http://rasr.rice.edu)

**Email:** [riceasreview@gmail.com](mailto:riceasreview@gmail.com)

**About the cover:** Fifty-one nations and territories defined geographically as “Asia” by the United Nations are represented by their decreasing order of population. Designed by Justin Park.



The second edition of RASR would not have been possible without the generous support of Rice's Chao Center for Asian Studies. The Editors are profoundly indebted to CCAS Director Dr. Sonia Ryang and Assistant Director Dr. Haejin Koh. Without their tireless support, assistance, advice, and encouragement, the journal would not have been able to achieve such a high academic standard. By drawing on the academic expertise of Dr.'s Ryang and Koh, RASR was able to find its footing as an institution, which will allow the journal to continue to publish high-quality content long after its initial editors have left Rice.

The RASR staff also extend their heartfelt thanks to Dr. Brianne Donaldson, Dr. Steven Lewis, Dr. Sonia Ryang, and Dr. Nanxiu Qian for their generous donation of time and expertise as faculty reviewers for the articles in RASR's inaugural edition. The expert insights provided by faculty reviewers greatly enhanced the academic caliber of the articles included in this edition of RASR. We are extremely grateful that the authors published in this edition of RASR had the opportunity to draw from the immense body of faculty expertise on Rice's campus.

We would also like to thank the authors themselves, as without their willingness to work with us as we felt our way through the editing process, there would be no journal to publish at all. We appreciate the time and effort they put into their articles, and wish them the best of luck in their academic and professional pursuits.

Photo courtesy: "Mechanical Laboratory, Power Plant and Campanile architectural rendering, Rice Institute." (1910) Rice University: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/75405>.

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# Looking North: The Central Asian Geopolitical Complexities of Transnational Terrorism in Afghanistan

Colton Cox

## ABSTRACT

This paper interrogates how the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, or ISIS-K, holds the potential for far-reaching, transnational consequences despite its relatively small presence within Afghanistan. A description of the recent history of the rise of ISIS-K is followed by an examination of how ISIS-K's presence touches on numerous facets of Afghan foreign relations. Specifically, Afghanistan's relations with its Central Asian neighbors and the Russian Federation, international frameworks for security cooperation, and concerns related to energy security and infrastructure will all be analyzed through the lens of the threat posed by ISIS-K. The analysis concludes with recommendations for U.S. policymakers wishing to comprehend and assuage this extremist threat.

## INTRODUCTION: AFGHANISTAN AND A NEW EURASIAN THREAT ENVIRONMENT

The threat matrix in Afghanistan has been altered significantly over the past several years. While Taliban forces have shown signs of weakening in certain regions, and hopes for pro-government consolidation have increasingly been touted by domestic and international voices, a new threat has figured more prominently into the calculus of the beleaguered nation: transnational terrorism. In particular, the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (hereafter "ISIS-K") has both inflicted a new string of casualties upon the Afghan populace since its rise in 2014, and forced Afghan officials to devise new tactical strategies to contain this burgeoning threat. Nonetheless, viewing ISIS-K as simply a domestic threat to Afghanistan's national integrity would overlook the broader geopolitical consequences which the Afghan-centered incubation of such a terrorist faction could hold. Specifically, just as ISIS-K's ideological origins derive from a belief in the transnational domination of radical Islam, so does this group's activity hold transnational implications for states lying near Afghanistan.

While nations such as Iran, Pakistan, India and China have all had to reckon with the shifting threat landscape in Afghanistan,<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan's relationships with the Central Asian states to its north—including the Russian Federation itself—reveals a particularly

complex web of geopolitical considerations. Utilizing a variety of media and open-source research resources, along with reports from international oversight agencies such as United Nations task forces, this report examines how the presence of transnationally-focused terrorism in Afghanistan has affected geopolitical strategy in the Eurasian sphere on a number of levels, including both military and energy-related considerations. Ultimately, this work culminates in recommendations for U.S. policy makers and NATO military personnel intent on assuaging conflict in Afghanistan, arguing that while American discussion of Afghan geopolitics has traditionally centered on the nation's proximity to Pakistan and broader South Asia, a truly coherent and durable Afghan security policy must equally account for the nuanced alliances and confrontations present in the post-Soviet sphere.

## UNDERSTANDING THE SALIENCE OF THE ISIS-K THREAT

As the capability of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has waned throughout 2017 due to an escalated air campaign by the U.S.-led Coalition,<sup>2</sup> Islamic State affiliates in other region have nonetheless become causes of concern. This phenomenon is exemplified by the case of ISIS-K in Afghanistan, known by the Arabic name of Wilayat Khurasan, referring to the territory of modern-day Afghanistan and other pockets of Central Asia. ISIS-K began to consolidate

power within Afghanistan's northeastern Nangarhar Province in late 2014, officially announcing its own presence in January 2015.<sup>3</sup> The fact that the faction's first proclaimed emir, Hafiz Saeed Khan Orakzai, along with deputy emir Abdul Rauf Khadim, were both former Taliban commanders, made clear that this new force had enough appeal to poach disgruntled Taliban members, allowing ISIS-K to become a contender in the struggle for Afghan territory.<sup>4</sup> Estimates of the group's numerical strength vary, with Pentagon data suggesting that the group had fallen to 1,000 fighters in mid-summer 2017 from a high of 2,500 men in 2015<sup>5</sup> and Russian government sources alleging that up to 10,000 ISIS-K fighters currently remain within Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Scholars from the Center for Pakistan Studies at the Middle East Institute nonetheless note that the majority of ISIS-K's manpower derives not from native Afghan forces, but rather from members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a loose collection of militants operating within Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, along with foreign fighters from areas such as Central Asia.<sup>7</sup> Figure 1 displays the areas to which ISIS-K has spread within the country, with fighters being most concentrated in Logar, Kunar, and Nangarhar Provinces in the east while also maintaining limited operations in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Badakhshan, both of which border the Republic of Tajikistan.

It is precisely the presence of foreign Central Asian fighters within ISIS-K, and the group's relative proximity to neighboring Central Asian nations that distinguish ISIS-K as a uniquely transnational threat. Although the Taliban has explicitly distanced itself from cross-national ambitions of either attacking or conquering foreign lands, concentrating solely on consolidating Afghanistan as an Islamic emirate, ISIS-K has been driven by its unrestrained drive for territory; thus, it acts as much more than a typical intra-national insurgent force.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in terms of civilian casualties inflicted by both groups, ISIS-K has shown itself by certain measures to be more willing to target

civilians than has the Taliban. For the first half of 2016, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan noted that while ISIS-K caused fewer civilian casualties than the Taliban, whose attacks were more prevalent and widespread across the nation, ISIS-K "targeted civilians in 33 of 45 attacks or incidents attributed to them".<sup>9</sup> Thus, explicitly harming civilians has factored more prominently into ISIS-K's strategy than that of the Taliban, despite the former lacking the manpower and logistical capability of the latter. This disturbing trend suggests that just as ISIS-K's ideology centers more on cross-border domination than the Taliban's Pashtun nationalism, ISIS-K's targeting of civilians implies that the faction could pose a concrete security threat to nations near to its operational base in northeast Afghanistan.

## THE THREAT TO CENTRAL ASIAN NATIONS

Out of the many means by which ISIS-K's brand of Salafi-Jihadist terrorism could penetrate northward, Afghanistan's porous and mountainous border with Tajikistan perhaps elicits the most concern among domestic and international observers. Stretching 1,300 kilometers long and lacking a strong presence of security forces from either nation, this border has become a haven for narcotics trade and violent crime.<sup>10</sup> In the same vein, members of militant organizations have sought refuge within this border region, to the extent that Tajik President Emomali Rahmon estimated that up to 15,000 militants were based there in early 2016.<sup>11</sup> As a state situated in such a precarious geopolitical position, Tajikistan has expressed concern over "terrorist threats to [its] own stability emanating from Afghanistan," including "the potential spread of ISIS-K".<sup>12</sup> This claim of the potential "spillover" of the ISIS-K threat through this rugged border region must be interrogated further, however. In particular, while this border region could certainly afford ISIS-K militants a strategic tactical position from which to attack Tajik infrastructure and civilians, Tajikistan's internal security

could just as likely be threatened by an exacerbated flow of refugees from Afghanistan into the country.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the fluidity with which militants and citizens alike can travel from northern Afghanistan to its Tajik neighbor could be conducive toward both direct ISIS attacks on Tajik soil and political instability within the country if President Emomali Rahmon is forced to reckon with a burgeoning refugee crisis. While Rahmon was reported to have displayed “no evident alarm” toward Taliban skirmishes in Afghan provinces close to the Tajik capital of Dushanbe in past years,<sup>14</sup> it remains quite likely that violence from ISIS-K, an organization which aims specifically to stretch beyond Afghan confines, could force the Rahmon regime to reassess its strategic priorities in dealing with nascent threats upon its borders.

To Afghanistan’s northeast, Uzbekistan and its relation to ISIS-K violence bring about another level of nuance to the question of terrorist “spillover.” A significant number of militants from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a violent Islamist organization which fought for dominance against Uzbekistan’s secular regime under the late Islam Karimov,<sup>15</sup> have increasingly aligned themselves with and joined the ranks of ISIS-K. ISIS-K leadership has reportedly expanded its influence by transferring fighters loyal to IMU to Afghanistan’s northern Jowzjan Province, a region lying near the country’s Uzbek border.<sup>16</sup> General John Nicholson, Commander of U.S. and NATO forces of the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, has personally claimed that IMU fighters form part of the backbone of ISIS-K along with Afghan Taliban defectors and TTP members.<sup>17</sup> That a movement whose very mission centers on employing violent means to create an Islamist-led Uzbekistan has “evolv[ed] and integrat[ed] itself into international jihadi organizations like ISIS-K” underscores that a crucial danger of ISIS-K is its ability to transform ethnic-based movements such as IMU into transnational actors.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani traveled to Tashkent to discuss

“regional security” relations between the two nations as recently as this month,<sup>19</sup> the new Uzbek regime under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has displayed its willingness to view Afghan instability resulting from phenomena such as IMU-ISIS-K synergy as having potential transnational consequences.

The previous section’s focus on Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is not meant to diminish the significance of how other states such as Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan find themselves squarely within Central Asia’s shifting threat nexus. Indeed, Turkmenistan’s wide border region with Afghanistan has also been a focal point of violence,<sup>20</sup> and foreign fighters from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have proven to be attracted to ISIS’s form of transnational jihad on numerous occasions.<sup>21</sup> It bears mentioning that certain analysts have doubted the prospect of radical jihadism penetrating such central Asian states, given that all these states experienced—and have largely clung to—the same brand of state-mandated secularism of the Soviet Union, making violent jihadist and general Islamist movements much less politically and socially viable than in a state such as Afghanistan which historically fought against Soviet rule.<sup>22</sup> However, this argument overlooks the rather unpredictable and difficult-to-contain nature of transnational terrorism embodied by ISIS-K. While political Islam as an ideology may not find success among Central Asian regimes steeped in post-Soviet secularism, ISIS-K’s ability to propagandize and encourage individual-based attacks could very well mean that isolated acts of jihadist violence in such republics will be much more arduous to identify and contain. This possibility is bolstered by the fact that foreign fighters from Central Asia have been attracted to ISIS’s activities in its traditional base within the Levant, with those who return to their home nations posing a threat due to their radicalization.<sup>23</sup>

On this note regarding the intersection of post-Soviet governing dynamics and the threat of radicalism posed by ISIS-K, this investigation now turns to an examination of how another post-Soviet power has



factored into the evolving dynamic of regional stability within Central Asia: the Russian Federation itself.

### **THE RUSSIAN QUESTION: A PATH TO POST-SOVIET DOMINANCE?**

Through a number of efforts spanning diplomatic, military and energy spheres, Russia has sought to portray itself as a broker of influence and power in the wake of transnational instability emanating from Afghanistan. Notably, however, popular estimations of the motivations behind Russia's projection into the Central Asian sphere range from pragmatic to cynical. On one hand, some analysts of Afghan and Russian affairs have theorized that Russia has adopted a more active role in catalyzing the Afghan peace process because it fears ISIS-K as an especially volatile brand of radicalism more threatening than the Taliban.<sup>24</sup> Given Russia's own history of violent extremism emanating from the Northern Caucasus, Russian apprehension toward ISIS-K can be understood on one level as a straightforward display of realpolitik seeking to be cognizant of all possible threats to Russian and broader Eurasian stability. Arkady Dubnov, an expert analyst from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Moscow Center, has claimed that "the long-term threat of Central Asian jihad is quite real".<sup>25</sup> Zamir Kabulov, Russian Special Envoy to Afghanistan, recently asserted that ISIS-K militants "are being prepared for a war against Central Asia, against the interests of Russia".<sup>26</sup> Kabulov has also been quoted as saying that ISIS-K's pattern of attacking civilians poses "a serious security threat for the countries of Central Asia and the southern regions of Russia," thus further conceptually linking the fates of Russian and Central Asian regions alike.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, numerous more pointed criticisms have circulated in international media, charging that Russian forces have armed and supplied other forms of patronage to the Afghan Taliban in order to utilize the organization as a counterweight to ISIS-K. American military commanders along with a range of U.S. and British media outlets have reported that Russia has

provided both arms and funds to Taliban fighters battling ISIS-K in order to deprive the latter of a shelter from which to launch attacks north into Central Asia and Russia itself.<sup>28</sup> Though Russia has sought to cultivate a degree of diplomatic cordiality with the Taliban as an organization in order to hold sway in designs for an Afghanistan peace settlement, Russian officials such as Kabulov and Press Director for Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova have vehemently denied assertions that Russia has provided tangible support to individual Taliban militants themselves, decrying such accusations as "absurd and baseless".<sup>29</sup>

With these factors in mind, many international policy observers remain skeptical that the Kremlin's intentions genuinely include ensuring regional security, and instead allege that Russia views the threat of transnational terrorism as an opportunity through which to wield more political influence in former Soviet states. John Herbst, the former American ambassador to Uzbekistan and Atlantic Council Eurasia expert, charges that while Moscow maintains "legitimate concerns" over ISIS penetration into republics to its south, Russian officials also see this fear as an "opportunity" to increase their bargaining power and political clout among Central Asian leaders.<sup>30</sup> Some have gone so far as to propose that Russia has artificially augmented and overstressed the possibility of ISIS advancement into Central Asia in order to maintain regime stability in Central Asian republics loyal to Moscow, and to increase Russia's military foothold in the region.<sup>31</sup> In sum, a range of opinions regarding Russian involvement in strengthening political and military ties in Central Asia and Afghanistan has circulated among foreign policy circles, with perspectives being divided as to whether the Kremlin acts out of opportunism or a more grounded anxiety regarding the unpredictable, fluid threat posed by ISIS-K's transnational ambitions.

Regardless of discord among such viewpoints, one cannot deny that violence in Afghanistan over the past several years has pushed Russia to devise new means of reestablishing its standing within Central

Asia's republics. It is on this note that I turn to an examination of the means by which Russian and Central Asian officials have managed a post-Soviet military architecture in the region which has increasingly been tested by—and currently stands much to lose from -- the looming prospect of Afghan violence becoming a more transnational phenomenon.

## **TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM'S EFFECT ON SECURITY COOPERATION**

One tangible means by which Russia has sought to combat the geopolitical threat of ISIS-K's brand of extremism is by capitalizing on pre-existing military alliances in the region. The most crucial of these structures is the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russian-led military cooperation bloc consisting of the Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Cognizant of the aforementioned threat posed by the insecure Afghan-Tajik border, Russia in May 2015 contributed 500 soldiers to a 2,500-man-strong military drill in this region, which then-CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha claimed would fortify the CSTO's ability "to push back any force coming from the southern frontier," referring specifically to northern Afghanistan.<sup>32</sup> Though Tajikistan hosts hundreds of Russian troops as part of Russia's 201st Motorized Rifle Division,<sup>33</sup> Russia's primary military base in the country nonetheless lies outside of formal CSTO jurisdiction.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Tajik officials specifically requested that Russia remove its forces from the Afghan border in 2005.<sup>35</sup> With these facts in mind, Russia has utilized its connection to Tajikistan as a CSTO member state to consolidate what has been a rocky military relationship with the Rahmon regime over the past decades. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Dushanbe in February 2017, brokering an agreement through which Russian forces based in Tajikistan could once again be deployed to the Afghan border following 17 years of absence. Moreover, Russia in 2015 agreed to delegate new Mi-24P attack helicopters to Tajikistan "in case of renewed

Afghan insecurity."<sup>36</sup>

Kyrgyzstan, as a fellow member of the CSTO, has also been open to augmented Russian assistance, with former President Almazbek Atambayev requesting a second Russian military base in Kyrgyz territory within the past year.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, while Uzbekistan is formerly a CSTO member, having withdrawn in 2012, the Kremlin has nonetheless displayed a renewed interest in cultivating military ties with the republic even outside of a formal treaty arrangement.<sup>38</sup> Following Tajikistan's path, the Mirziyoyev regime has allowed joint military drills with Russia on its soil, exemplifying a new "synergy between the perspectives of Russia and Uzbekistan on instability in Afghanistan," and such endeavors could potentially encourage Uzbekistan to rejoin the CSTO.<sup>39</sup> While Turkmenistan has been the most independent of all Central Asian states regarding Russian military cooperation and has never joined the CSTO either, Lewis claims that the ruling Berdymukhamedov regime might feel no other choice but to allow a more vigorous Russian military presence if violence on the Turkmen-Afghan border becomes more pronounced.<sup>40</sup>

Even if Uzbekistan's CSTO membership does not materialize, Moscow also currently remains able to leverage its connection to Uzbekistan through a separate treaty network, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Boasting China and Russia as founding states and India as a member state, the SCO admitted Uzbekistan in 2001, and some analysts charge that Russia wishes to use its political capital within this geopolitical alliance, in tandem with the CSTO, to "reshape the security dynamics of the [Central Asian] region."<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, these developments all suggest that Russia envisions a greater role for itself within transnational security alliances covering Central Asia. Considering that Russian officials have made bold statements assessing the terrorist threat to Central Asia during past summits of the CSTO, with envoy Zamir Kabulov in April 2016 noting that "there are now 10,000 Islamic State fighters in Afghanistan...being

trained against Central Asia and Russia,”<sup>42</sup> it is evident that Russia has directly rationalized its more assertive geopolitical role by referencing the transnational nature of ISIS-K. Military cooperation alone, however, cannot fully explain Russia’s designs for how to effect stability in its post-Soviet sphere; in reality, considerations surrounding power provision and energy diplomacy have increasingly become crucial factors in considering the damage that transnational terrorism could portend.

### **WHAT ELSE IS AT RISK: ENERGY GEOPOLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA**

The precariousness of the ISIS-K threat in Afghanistan cannot be fully contextualized without considering the question of energy provision within the nation. As a country with a massive shortage of electricity and broader energy needs, Afghanistan and in particular the remote, mountainous provinces in which ISIS-K has staked its territorial claim are hindered in providing the logistical capacity for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) to identify and eliminate ISIS-K attacks on civilians and government infrastructure. This picture becomes more nuanced when considering that Afghan Security Forces would likely be even more encumbered if not for Afghanistan’s dependence on Central Asian nations for energy provision. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) reported in July 2017 that Afghanistan imports 35.2% of its electricity needs from Uzbekistan, 30.5% from Tajikistan and 13.4% from Turkmenistan, with only approximately a quarter of all Afghan citizens having access to this imported power.<sup>43</sup> Turkmenistan, boasting plentiful oil and gas reserves, implemented its Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline “megaproject” in December 2015, granting Afghanistan a needed lifeline to another crucial energy source.<sup>44</sup> These cross-border developments underscore that Afghanistan’s very ability to provide electricity for security and basic social needs is predicated on the vitality of regional economies to its north.

However, where is one to draw the connection between this energy geopolitics landscape and broader regional security? I argue that electricity and gas infrastructure linked to Afghanistan’s Central Asian neighbors will likely become a more prevalent target for ISIS-K for two reasons. Firstly, destroying energy infrastructure has been a tactic of the Taliban in the past, with the organization targeting several transmission towers in Baghlan Province in January 2016, halting approximately half of the requisite megawatts flowing to the capital of Kabul.<sup>45</sup> Given that ISIS-K has proven more likely than the Taliban in recent months to target civilian regions, and has also undertaken violent attacks upon the capital, dismantling energy infrastructure supplying power to Kabul from Central Asia just as Taliban members have done could become an especially useful tactic for ISIS-K. Conversely, however, ISIS-K might elect to target gas-related infrastructure from Turkmenistan precisely for the reason that certain Taliban elements have chosen to safeguard it. Turkmenistan has stood out among its Central Asian neighbors in being able to leverage rather non-confrontational relations with both the Afghan National Unity Government in Kabul and the Taliban itself, a state of affairs which has led Taliban members in central Afghanistan to allow Turkmen in Afghanistan to guard the TAPI pipeline project.<sup>46</sup> As delegitimizing and defeating the Taliban has proved central to ISIS-K’s mission, demolishing gas infrastructure which the Taliban has hesitated to touch could endow ISIS-K with an even greater appearance of dominance and control in the eyes of Afghan and Central Asian officials, forcing such leaders to consider ISIS-K a greater tactical threat to regional security even if the group’s numbers dwindle.

With the security-related sensitivity of energy infrastructure between Afghanistan and Central Asia in mind, Russia’s role in such affairs must also be scrutinized. Just as Russian military leaders have sought to capitalize on existing bases and personnel deployments in Central Asian republics, so has it been reported that

Russian businessmen are increasingly looking south to consider how to profit from energy investments in Afghanistan and its neighbors. Dmitry Antonov, Chairman of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, remarked that electricity production in the country remains an area of interest for Russian investors, and Kabul welcomed a delegation of over 20 Russian businessmen and prospective investors in October 2017.<sup>47</sup> Russia has also sought to utilize its “transit leverage” and existing state-run enterprises to gain greater entry into Central Asian markets, with Russia’s majority state-owned Gazprom’s 2014 acquisition of Kyrgyzstan’s formerly state-run Kyrgyzgaz, along with a plethora of Kyrgyzstan’s pipelines and distribution facilities, being a key example of this phenomenon.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, Russia’s energy dealings with post-Soviet states have certainly not been without conflict, and herein lies again the connection of energy geopolitics to regional security from transnational threats such as ISIS-K. Aminjonov classifies Russia’s “declining influence” in the energy sector of nations such as Turkmenistan (which once denied Kremlin desires to participate in the TAPI project) as a symptom of a new “great-power rivalry” in which Russia has sought to penetrate the Central Asian energy sector so as not to be displaced by looming powers such as China. From one perspective, one could argue that Russia’s path back to its former Soviet regional dominance is conditioned on how greatly Central Asian leaders express fear over transnational radicalism bleeding from Afghanistan into their domains. To elaborate, it is indeed possible that if traditionally closed Central Asian nations such as Turkmenistan begin to welcome more Russian military cooperation as a counterbalance to fomenting jihadism in Afghanistan, such security synergy might prove conducive to more amicable diplomatic ties and more mutual energy sharing agreements between Central Asian powers and Russia. On the other hand, if the ISIS-K threat is to wane and retreat from Central Asian border regions, a potential stagnation in Russian military capacity in these regions could disincentivize

Russian investments in burgeoning oil, gas and electricity projects in Central Asia. These potential scenarios, while admittedly speculative, nonetheless reveal the manner in which the energy and military landscapes in Central Asia might be influenced as ISIS-K’s powder keg of violent, transnational extremism either causes post-Soviet states to run toward or keep distance from the Kremlin.

### **RETURNING STATESIDE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY MAKERS AND CONCLUDING NOTES**

Through this analysis, I have shown the ways in which a relatively small and sparsely populated extremist cell in the rugged terrain of Afghanistan can hold vast consequences for broader regional stability within Central Asia, especially when considering how this extremist threat could alter the geopolitical rationales of the Russian Federation. Some may argue that this analysis could have encompassed a variety of other transnationally-focused groups such as Al-Qaeda and splinter jihadist groups headquartered on the Afghan-Pakistani border. Bearing this criticism in mind, I would nonetheless assert that because Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri has publicly aligned himself with the Taliban cause while denouncing ISIS factions as renegades, and because no other transnationally-minded jihadist group in the Afghanistan region has garnered the mass public attention of ISIS-K, ISIS-K remains the preeminent exemplar of an explicitly transnational terrorist threat to Afghanistan and its northern neighbors’ integrity. These developments beg the question, however, of how the United States as a seasoned power broker within Afghanistan can most effectively contain the threat of ISIS-K and ward off regional political upheaval to Afghanistan’s north at the same time.

As one crucial recommendation, American commanders within Operation Resolute Support, with the full cooperation of other NATO members, ought

to elevate the Tajik-Afghan border to a higher priority of monitoring. As this report has shown, though Afghanistan's relative proximity to Central Asia could pose a threat to each state in the region, Tajikistan is uniquely positioned to suffer from flows of extremists through its permeable border with Afghanistan. In order for Tajikistan not to become a linchpin of ISIS-K infiltration into Central Asia from northern Afghan provinces, American and NATO forces could stand much to gain from dispatching a greater proportion of troops to the Tajik border to advise and assist ANDSF forces there, even though the majority of ISIS-K fighting remains concentrated in Afghanistan's eastern border with Pakistan.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, I would recommend that U.S. officials involved in international oversight initiatives such as SIGAR and UNAMA, along with Department of Defense officials charged with devising Congressional recommendations, to devise task forces more specifically focused on the sensitive energy climate between Afghanistan and Central Asian states. More detailed documentation and analysis of trends in exactly how much energy is exported to Afghanistan from individual Central Asian states could prove immensely useful in helping to craft a U.S.-led policy that more wholly recognizes Afghanistan's dependence on Central Asian states to ensure viable security. Moreover, thorough mapping and documentation of new infrastructure projects such as electricity grids and pipelines could assist U.S. intelligence officials and Resolute Support commanders in anticipating potential threats from ISIS-K which seek to weaken Kabul's central energy supply from the shelter of remote provinces.

These recommendations are only preliminary, and are contingent upon a new flaring up of ISIS-K violence, which by many American assessments has become less likely over the past year. Indeed, Middle East Institute scholars themselves have asserted that "U.S. military pressure is complicating the Islamic State's attempts to expand into Afghanistan, and is eroding its capabilities."<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, as President

Donald Trump has inaugurated a new policy of "open-ended commitment" in Afghanistan which he has dubbed as part of the Administration's "South Asia Policy,"<sup>51</sup> the ultimate contribution of this report to current American policy dialogue is as follows: no matter whether the threat level of ISIS-K increases or decreases in the coming months and years, a coherent and lasting policy to contain this extremist threat must pay as much attention to the complex landscape of post-Soviet Central Asia as it does to Afghanistan's South Asian neighbors. While geopolitical dealings with Pakistan and India indeed bear immeasurable importance in resolving the Afghan conflict, Afghan-Central Asian relations pose a nuanced array of military and energy-related considerations which policy makers concerned about global security cannot afford to ignore.

## APPENDIX

Figure 1: Map of ISIS-K Operations as of May 2016. Source: Middle East Institute.



## NOTES

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## COLTON COX



**SENIOR  
MCMURTRY  
COLLEGE**

**SOCIOLOGY &  
POLICY STUDIES  
JEWISH STUDIES  
MINOR**

# Morality Is Not Enough, Power Is Not Enough: The Uneasy Discourse of Protective Feminine Spaces in Late Imperial Chinese Literature

Gennady Gorin

## ABSTRACT

The classic Chinese novel *Dream of Red Chamber* focuses on stories that take place within the confines of Prospect Garden. Bao-yu, the heir to the Jia family, creates an Edenic sanctuary for the girls of the family. Through the creation, maintenance, and destruction of Prospect Garden, and in the context of other Qing-period literature, the author explores the concept of femininity, and its fragility, within a Confucian society. Prospect Garden represents two protective entities: the physical and political structure originally intended to protect the Confucian feminine chastity, and the cultural structure intended to preserve the Daoist feminine yin, largely fostered by Bao-yu. Ultimately, Bao-yu's reliance on a Confucian framework to preserve the Daoist feminine yin leaves Prospect Garden vulnerable to invasion from the paternalistic society outside, resulting in the collapse of the garden. As an optimistic solution to the inherent issue of establishing uniquely feminine morality in mainstream patriarchal structure, the author suggests the idealized mythical women's state in Xue Shaohui's *Biographies of Foreign Women*, which presents a novel physical and political structure to nurture the creation of a feminine identity.

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Much of the Chinese literary classic *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1791) by Cao Xueqin and Gao E takes place within Prospect Garden, a walled garden built and used by the wealthy Jia family, who constitute the primary focus of the work. This garden is inhabited by the family's girls, as well as the novel's protagonist Bao-yu, a boy who is the earthly incarnation of a divine stone from the Land of Illusion (Taixu huanjing 太虛幻境). The novel's microcosmic society is considered to epitomize the authors' Qing culture. The Prospect Garden serves as a useful case study that conceptualizes and illustrates a feminine alternative to the patriarchal Confucian mainstream of imperial Qing culture. The Prospect Garden is a fictive space dedicated to protecting femininity, despite the fact that it is ultimately housed in an overwhelmingly patriarchal space and society. The tensions between these two forces correspond to the challenges of creating a stable feminine space under the domination of Confucian values, and had broad cultural currency, as exemplified by several contemporary fairy tales depicting all-female societies. This conflict may be resolved by the depiction of an idealized mythical women's state in Xue Shaohui's *Biographies of Foreign Women*, which retains the feminine nurturing morality

but jettisons patriarchal Confucianism in favor of Western democracy.

To discuss Prospect Garden as a protective space, it is necessary to define the target of its protection. This task presents a challenge because several different target categories are apparent, but only one transgresses the boundaries of the Confucian society and creates an alternative. Within *Dream of the Red Chamber*, femininity may be conceptualized as based on sex, gender, Confucian purity, or Daoist yin. Only the Daoist image was expressly concerned with nurturing, humanist virtue. Confucian purity followed reactionary mores; by the time of the Qing, it idealized suicide to preserve chastity practically to the exclusion of all other virtuous actions that could be undertaken by a woman.<sup>1</sup> As this patriarchal system was the ever-present and self-evident mainstream, alternative conceptions of femininity as a moral force could not simply be defined in their own terms, but were naturally contrapositioned to the mainstream. In *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the contraposition results in a sophisticated critique of Qing Confucian society: it is not only the threat against which the garden protects its girls, but also the structure that enables the garden to exist. Thus, the



garden's relationship to sex and gender is complex and uneasy.

While the distinction between sex, gender, and the moral *yin* femininity is explored in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, it is particularly pronounced in other classics of Chinese literature, such as Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West* and Li Ruzhen's compilation of fairy tales *Flowers in the Mirror*. These texts' traveling protagonists arrive in nations ruled by women, face threat and struggle, and stage escapes. Two factors motivate close analysis of the reasons for these states' injustice despite the cultural connection between femininity and benevolent nurture: first, these brief adventures only allow for depiction of simple archetypes, far more overt than the complexities and unsaid nuances of *Dream of the Red Chamber*; and second, the presence of tension between female sex and expectations of femininity in classic novels confirms that the subject was a familiar part of the cultural discourse.

In *Flowers in the Mirror*, the protagonist, Tang Ao, travels overseas with a band of merchants and visits various strange lands, including the Country of Women. The country is gender-swapped with regard to Tang Ao's expectations – physiological males are called “female,” wear makeup, and bind their feet; physiological females are called “male” and assert a dominant role in society. A relative of Tang Ao's, Merchant Lin, is chosen as the King's Imperial Consort; Tang Ao and others repair the country's canals to secure his release, then mount a mission to rescue the Prince, in danger from concubines' court intrigues. The society is a mirror image of Imperial China. Despite the merchants' challenges adapting to the gender convention, the structures – as well as social ills – map from the Chinese “Kingdom on Earth” without any problems.<sup>2</sup> Merely replacing the patriarchy with a matriarchy leads to no greater virtue; the women proceed to impose foot-binding and the men proceed to engage in vicious intrigue. *Flowers in the Mirror* presents the reader with a lacuna. Some benevolent factor of society is missing, despite the retention of Confucian values of feminine

chastity and the political preeminence of women. This missing element is the moral ground and individual virtue afforded by Daoist femininity. Its absence starkly demonstrates that *yin* femininity is related to, but transcends and is not dependent on, the female sex. In fact, of all the citizens of the Country of Women, the one who seems to best exemplify this element is the Prince, a girl willing to abandon her familiar gender role, live as a feminine woman, and undergo hardship in a strange land in order to escape the court's threat. This fluid adaptation to circumstances echoes Daoist themes of versatility and resistance to structure; since the Prince was brought up expressing masculine gender, her willingness to cast away her previous role signifies that *yin* feminine individualism also transcends femininity as defined by gender behavior.

*Journey to the West* chronicles a lengthy search for Buddhist scripture, undertaken by Sanzang, a powerful Buddhist monk, and his magical companions. The Sanzang character is loosely based on the monk Xuanzang, who traveled from China to India and back during the Tang dynasty. At one point in the narrative, the pilgrims reach a river. Upon drinking from it, Sanzang and one of his companions, Pig, magically become pregnant. The group discovers that the river is the frontier of the “Womanland of Western Liang.” This state is entirely populated by women, who become pregnant by drinking from the “Motherhood River,” and can trigger a miscarriage by drinking from the “Miscarriage Spring in Childfree Cave in Mount Offspring Dissolved.”<sup>3</sup> The society's structure is not detailed, but the old women who take care of Sanzang during his pregnancy mention that any other women in the country would have been vicious to the visitors: the “younger ones” would have “forced the pilgrims] to have sex with them” or “cut all the flesh off their] bodies to put in perfume bags”.<sup>4</sup> One old woman's clothing seems to be foreign, with a wrapped head garment, tunic, pants, and apron, perhaps drawing on Chinese images of Central Asian peoples, such as the matriarchal Muosuo (摩梭), a matriarchal society located at the

border of the Sichuan and Yunnan provinces. However, the text does not dwell on their gender expression, and certainly does not explicitly masculinize any of the women of Western Liang.<sup>5</sup> This chapter serves as an illustration of the aforementioned decoupling between feminine virtue and conventional social expressions of femininity: even though “Womanland” grants women all power, including the physical means of protecting and perpetuating the population, it is not a protective space. The women are lustful, vicious, and murderous, with no humane sympathy for the pilgrims. This depiction of a structurally successful but morally bankrupt female space demonstrates a persistent awareness of the insufficiency of female sex and gender for the institutional expression of feminine virtue.

The inhabitants of *Dream of the Red Chamber's* Prospect Garden, particularly Jia Bao-yu and Lin Dai-yu, construct their protective space by applying moral and individualistic precepts via the physical and political institution of the garden. Initially, they are successful: the garden serves as an enclave, preserving the girls' safety and allowing them a degree of relative freedom. The source of corruption and mode of protection are described using a metaphor of fallen flower petals carried past Drenched Blossoms Weir and out of the garden by a stream. Dai-yu collects the petals and buries them in the garden. The water in the garden is clean, but “beyond the weir” the water is impure with dirt and filth; Dai-yu thinks it “cleaner” and more dignified to keep the beautiful, fully realized products of the garden inside it rather than force them to undergo corruption.<sup>6</sup> Bao-yu thinks the idea is beautiful and helps Dai-yu throughout the novel. Thus, the source of the corruption is the outside society surrounding the garden; if protection is withdrawn or the girls leave it, corruption becomes inevitable. At this point in the novel, Dai-yu has been seriously ill her entire life, experienced her mother's death, and moved from Yangzhou to Beijing, whereas Bao-yu has lived in the Jia family's Rong-guo household and been doted on since birth.<sup>7</sup> Dai-yu's position is placed in the mouth

of the more informed protagonist, and thus given authority. The garden is endowed with the intention of protecting purity against an ever-present threat.

While he has the opportunity, Bao-yu devotes himself to the frustrating task of protecting the women within the garden, helping them avoid punishment,<sup>8</sup> and effacing class boundaries by freely fraternizing, drinking, and playing games with female servants.<sup>9</sup> Within the framework of this discussion, it is significant to note that the culture of the garden is inherently feminine, corresponding to the female control over the private “inner chamber” areas of the household, but the femininity is not based on the three mainstream foundations of sex, gender, or Confucian purity. Bao-yu is a male, but he does not protect femininity by excluding himself. Similarly, Bao-yu's gender expression is fluid and eclectic with many feminine features, but he does not enforce or valorize femininity of the mainstream binary, preferring a more *laissez-faire* approach. Finally, Bao-yu lives in close contact with the family's daughters and maids, breaking Qing-era taboos regarding gender and class contact, and does not attempt to protect pure Confucian femininity by adhering to ritual. Thus, even an examination of the garden's everyday operation reveals that it seeks to enable something more sublime, a free-wheeling, transgressive, egalitarian, unstructured, nurturing, Daoist femininity.

To accomplish this, the garden institution uses two tools. The first is physical or political structure. This structure ranges from the literal physical walls surrounding the garden to the restrictions on entering and exiting the space, to the hierarchy of servants, to the great wealth that enables the garden to be constructed and maintained. This infrastructure provides the garden with the centralized control of resources necessary to continue leading an autonomous existence. The second tool Prospect Garden uses to enable its characteristically unconstrained Daoist femininity is a cultural or moral layer of *yin* meaning, exemplified by Bao-yu's symbolic guardianship of the garden. This layer directs the aforementioned resources to the benefit of the women.

Bao-yu creates this institution by imposing a meaning upon the physical structure, productively connecting a structural foundation to a moral *raison d'être*; however, his control of this connection does not give him control over the structural bedrock, leaving the garden vulnerable to outside forces.

The protective Prospect Garden is a fictive space. It happens to be located in a physical garden of the same name, but is quite distinct. In the imperial context, dominated by the examination system and its focus on the Confucian classics, humanist pursuit of a protective space carries cultural but no political or physical power; at best, it can reinterpret mainstream Confucian institutions that happen to be aligned with it. Thus, Bao-yu takes advantage of the ambiguity surrounding the term “femininity” to redefine it: a space conventionally established to safeguard female chastity to the total exclusion of humanity is instead used to safeguard female freedom to the exclusion of external politics. However, reinterpretation is not total control, and if the Confucian institutions that happened to support the garden realign against it, the fictive space has no chance but to fail. This fragility is particularly evident in three “edge cases” that define the boundaries of the protective garden’s interactions with the mainstream culture: the garden’s creation, the raid orchestrated by the Wang ladies, and the garden’s destruction with the death of Dai-yu.

The physical space of Prospect Garden is constructed to accommodate the visit of the imperial concubine, Bao-yu’s sister; the new garden replaces the Rong-guo garden and the Ning-guo All-scents garden.<sup>10</sup> As the sovereignty of the emperor is justified by the Confucian desire for stability via stable, universal, and immutable ruler-subject relationships, and the requisite respect allotted to the concubine stems not so much from her own identity as from her association with the imperial household, the vast resources used to construct the garden fundamentally meant to honor, and thus reaffirm, the patriarchal bonds defining the society’s structure. Conversely, these patriarchal bonds are the

reason for the physical garden’s existence, and the ultimate factor enabling the creation of the protective space that challenges the bonds. At the garden’s creation, political structure precedes the protective purpose.

The raid undertaken by Lady Wang later in the novel further demonstrates the fragility of the garden’s protective structure. Lady Wang, Bao-yu’s mother, suspects the garden’s maids of having seduced Bao-yu. Lady Wang’s niece, Wang Xi-feng, cautiously affirms her suspicions and prejudices. Further, Wang Xi-feng presents Lady Wang with a plan to search the garden, officially justified by the discovery of a bag with an obscene image but ultimately intended to place “trusted servants” in key positions in the garden.<sup>11</sup> The justification for the raid underlines the conflict between the Confucian and Daoist definitions of femininity: the Wang ladies are ostensibly working toward ensuring the chaste purity of the garden girls, by suppression both of the obscene imagery and of the courtship implied by the presence of the bag. If the moral purpose of the garden was aligned with this Confucian ideal of femininity, the raid would be a positive, albeit intrusive, action. However, the novel emphatically portrays the raid as a total moral failure. From the start, the investigation is a debacle, and the responsible party is suggested to be Xi-feng herself.<sup>12</sup> The raid serves as a pretext to satisfy Lady Wang’s personal vendetta against Skybright for looking similar to Lin Dai-yu, a cousin apparently hated for being closer to Bao-yu than the match intended by the family. The charge of seduction is hypocritical due to the trust Lady Wang places in Aroma, another one of Bao-yu’s maids; unlike Skybright, Aroma *did* have an inappropriate affair with Bao-yu.<sup>13</sup> Finally, even the aftermath of the raid results in despair and destruction: Lady Wang forces Skybright to leave the garden, whereupon the maid loses the garden’s protection and dies of her illness. Thus, the novel goes a step beyond stating that the Confucian cult of chastity is *comparatively* contradictory and destructive to the individualist feminine ideal, and delivers a searing indictment of the

preoccupation with purity as absolutely hypocritical, short-sighted, politically motivated, and so morally bankrupt as to abet the murder of an innocent girl. This vehement condemnation emphasizes that the garden can successfully exert humanist protection, but its inhabitants are powerless to prevent the arbitrary and overwhelming application of the restrictive Confucian system whose structure the garden exploits.

Finally, the garden ceases to exist as a protective structure at the moment of Lin Dai-yu's death and Bao-yu's unwitting marriage to another cousin, Xue Bao-chai.<sup>14</sup> Bao-yu is tricked into marrying the girl who compels him to leave the garden and join the ranks of civil scholars. Nearly simultaneously, the girl who avoided driving or coercing him dies. By this moment in the novel, Bao-yu is nearly out of his mind due to the loss of the jade he was born with, and exhibits a minimal response to his surroundings, except as concerns his beloved Dai-yu. Thus, the combination of the grandmother's desire to adhere to Confucian practice and have Bao-yu perpetuate the family line, as well as Bao-yu's inability to struggle and resist, effectively eliminate the Daoist protective function, rendering the garden totally subservient to Confucian mores. The death and the wedding both take place in the garden. The physical place remains, but the political priorities shift so they no longer align with the goal of preserving Bao-yu's enclave. Since the family feels Bao-yu should marry, he marries; the spell is broken, and for all his individualist values, Bao-yu no longer controls the resources to implement them.

Interestingly, like the raid, Bao-yu's marriage is orchestrated by Wang Xi-fang, who is described as an extremely beautiful woman yet was raised as a boy.<sup>15</sup> Her manipulation emphasizes the role of masculinity in destroying the garden's temporary protection and freedom, even if that masculinity acts through conventionally female rulers of the inner chamber. Wang Xi-fang causes the deaths of Skybright and Dai-yu. She is also involved in various other surreptitious schemes,<sup>16</sup> apparently enriching herself at the expense

of at least two suicides.<sup>17</sup> This characterization is a further indictment of the mainstream system's hypocrisy and willingness to abandon morality, as well as a possible metaphysical description of the masculine, destructive *yang* counterpoint to the nurturing *yin*. As with the *yin* itself, the relationship to sex, gender, and Confucian mores is quite complex, as Wang Xi-fang is physiologically female, expresses her gender as a woman, and publicly plays the role of an archetypal virtuous Confucian lady. Instead, the anti-nurturing element is expressed in her secrecy, viciousness, and corruption. This element thus seems to be the source of the universal social corruption feared and detested by Dai-yu and Bao-yu. While this description appears counterintuitive due to the conventional association between *yin* and concealment and treachery, it nevertheless makes sense in this instance, since the novel focuses on the dichotomy between protective individualism and anti-protective adherence to societal convention. Wang Xi-fang acts as an agent of the latter, and channels Lady Wang's power to destroy the garden that champions the former.

The garden's fragility is explicit in its arc throughout the novel. Its existence is contingent upon the fortuitous alignment of mainstream institutions, particularly imperial concubinage and confinement of the family's girls to an inner sanctum. It does not exist at the beginning of the story, and must be created to function. Once it exists, it requires maintenance and cooperation, and can still be invaded at will by agents of the mainstream. Finally, it collapses and can no longer serve its purpose. This fragility seems to suggest that the fictive space is not "natural." In contrast to the Land of Illusion that exists through the natural order, the idyllic, Edenic space of Prospect Garden cannot exist indefinitely in the context of a hostile Confucian society. Thus, the decline of Prospect Garden constitutes a lamentation of the fragility of protective institutions and their lack of independent structural support.

However, total pessimism may be inappropriate, as Cao and Gao subtly indicate using other structural tools.

Firstly, while the society has physical power over the enclave, the enclave may have cultural or metaphysical power over the society. In *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the decline of the Jia family is foretold long in advance; the destruction of the garden only seems to hasten it. Thus, the novel suggests that the bedrock institution itself may not be so stable, and should preserve individualist virtue, lest it be met with long-term retribution for its cruelty and flagrant disregard of benevolent morality. Secondly, Bao-yu's original form, the divine stone, lives in the Land of Illusion, which is a sublime feminine space; it is governed by the Fairy of Disenchantment, who prioritizes protection of women to the extent of visiting Bao-yu in a dream and educating him to prevent harm to the household's girls. The emotions it governs are feminine in the *yin* humanist sense, such as "fond infatuation" and "autumn grief," and even the prophetic texts use poetic forms very different from the standards valorized by the examination system.<sup>18</sup> The Land of Illusion is divine, powerful, and lasting. Although the stone is temporarily removed from the Land to live as a man, it eventually regains sublimity and returns to a magical domain. Thus, although the novel's view of the real world's prospects is at best bittersweet, it does leave hope that more permanent structures dedicated to protection of women could potentially exist, and uses these moral and divine powers as an example.

This hope was extended by Xue Shaohui in her *Biographies of Foreign Women* (1906). The bulk of her work consists of faithful translations of biographies of historical figures; however, a section on Greco-Roman mythology reimagines the world of divinities as a democracy governed by *mudao* (母道), or the Motherly Way, consisting of "motherly love" and "learning."<sup>19</sup> Although the connection between Xue's description and the source material is tenuous at best, she is not necessarily attempting pure representation. Instead, the envisioned idealized state is a work of social criticism, responding to the flaws of the Qing state and imagining a way for "women [to] care for themselves" given that men have failed to "treat women, children,

and the poor fairly."<sup>20</sup> The contrived association of the depiction with a powerful and ancient foreign culture legitimizes it and motivates its application to the contemporary social space. Finally, Xue continues the discourse between ruling structure and protective morality that appeared in the older literary sources; however, beyond simply lamenting it or deferring to supernatural enforcement of morality, she *expands* upon it by proposing a concrete method for implementation. This method appears to resemble a democracy with a highly developed bureaucratic apparatus; however, the moral foundation is purely Chinese and reflects "Daoist values of life and naturalness" and "Confucian... sincerity."<sup>21</sup> The political structure is supplemented by a description of a physical support for the society, the non-sexual reproduction through moisture used by high-ranking goddesses. Therefore, Xue's discourse recognizes the long-standing problems of borrowed structure in previous conceptions of protective female spaces, and solves these problems by creating a new structure, specifically directed toward harmony and subordinated to the female nurturing moral foundation.

Throughout these examples, the tension between practical structure and virtuous morality is visible and pervasive. Much of this tension stems from divergent conceptions of femininity as a hierarchical social role in mainstream Confucian theory and as an ethical individualism in the more marginalized Daoist thought, as well as recognition of the overwhelming political power held by Confucian institutions. *Flowers in the Mirror* and *Journey to the West* address the conflicts by pointing out the occasionally tenuous and arbitrary link between feminine nurturing morality and conventional social expressions of femininity, emphasizing that the moral foundation is quite decoupled from the structure and does not spontaneously arise merely because women are in power. Bao-yu of *Dream of the Red Chamber* attempts to institute such a moral foundation in his family's vast walled garden, but his efforts are undone by his reliance on mainstream structures; when they turn against him, he is completely powerless

and his protective space is destroyed. Xue Shaohui's more contemporary reinterpretation of Greco-Roman mythology as a Western-style democracy underpinned by moral femininity reconciles these two elements; although it is framed in an explicitly supernatural setting, it provides both hope and a concrete method for the construction of a state that would prioritize protection over coercion. Thus, these classics of Chinese literature engage in a common discourse that recognizes the challenges of creating protective feminine spaces without adequate institutional support and posits possible solutions toward their conceptualization as a remote, but realistic ideal.

## NOTES

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## GENNADY GORIN



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# The Implications of Kant's "Categorical Imperative" for Modern Egg Donation and Ancient Hindu Niyoga

Taylor Ginter

## ABSTRACT

In the past, Hindu women, under pressure to bear a son, had few options when natural conception proved difficult. To cope with male infertility, Hindu texts outlined a form of sperm donation called niyoga. In this article, the author uses Kantian Deontology's second categorical imperative to examine possible ethical tensions that exist in modern egg donation and niyoga as methods for solving infertility. Autonomy and consent, two values which follow from the categorical imperative, are considered. Due to technological and societal differences, these ethical questions manifest themselves differently within each donor-gamete process. The author's goal is not to reach a value judgment regarding which method is more ethical, rather it is to examine potential ethical tensions that arise for both donors and recipients under different historical value systems.

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## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The author acknowledges that gender and sex are both socially constructed ideas that may manifest themselves differently across cultures and time periods. Individuals assigned female at birth who now identify as male, or another gender, may still possess ovaries, fallopian tubes, and eggs that may be donated. Similarly, individuals assigned male at birth who now identify as female, or another gender, may still possess the ability to produce sperm. However, for the sake of brevity in this investigation, "woman/women" terminology is paired with egg donation. Additionally, the author recognizes that the definition of marriage/partnership may vary across cultures and time periods. The texts for niyoga all specify a marriage consisting of a man and a woman; however, the author has intentionally not specified a gender for a woman's partner in contemporary Euro-American culture.

Some women are unable to conceive a child through typical intercourse, whether due to their partner's infertility or their own. Because of this, if they wish to have a child they must find a different way to do so. People across time and space have suffered through this problem, and have devised different strategies for solving it. One such option is gamete, or sex cell, donation. This option has become popular in the modern day, largely through a process known as "egg donation." Similarly, a lesser-known historical process called niyoga allowed ancient Hindus to utilize sperm donation to conceive a child. Both of the aforementioned processes include the parents-to-be, the donor, and the resulting child, all of whom encounter different ethical tensions throughout the donation process, as well as afterwards. A way to examine these ethical tensions is through the lens of

Kantian philosophy's second categorical imperative--which prohibits treating humanity simply as a means for an end--as well as through the insights derived from it, such as a respect for persons, consent, autonomy, beneficence, and perfect and imperfect duties. Applying these insights to the reproductive techniques of niyoga and egg donation illuminates certain technological and cultural considerations for the parents, donors, and progeny involved.

## BACKGROUND: THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

The fundamental principle of ethical considerations for Immanuel Kant, a giant in the modern Western philosophical canon, can be labeled as his "categorical imperative." Two formulations of the categorical



imperative exist: one is to treat others the way you wish to be treated, and the second is to never treat humanity or anyone within it simply as a means for an end. The first formulation is the “Golden Rule” of ethics, often taught to small children. The second formulation, though, brings into play a plethora of principles of ethics, such as consent and autonomy. Consent and autonomy allow a person to act with a sense of dignity, and offer them a sense of respect. These parameters also lead to a set of “perfect” and “imperfect” duties. There is no legitimate excuse for not executing a perfect duty; for example, abstaining from killing an innocent person, or refraining from telling a lie. Imperfect duties, such as beneficence and nonmaleficence, also must be carried out, but have more flexibility as to how they are enacted; for example, a person may act beneficently by donating money or by volunteering their time -- whichever way best suits them is permitted.

This article solely uses the second formulation of Kant’s categorical imperative to examine gamete donation. In the face of infertility, gamete donation is a “means” for producing an “end” -- a child. Within the process of gamete donation, the various actors of parents, donor, and child are at risk of being treated simply as a means to carry out the process. The second formulation of the categorical imperative will be applied to the numerous aspects of egg donation and niyoga as they fit within their own respective cultures and the technologies of their times.

## GAMETE DONATION PROCESSES

### EGG DONATION

Using donated eggs to create an embryo is relatively new in the scope of modern medicine; the first successful “egg donation” pregnancy occurred as recently as 1983. Egg donation can be utilized to provide a child to a woman afflicted with a host of problems including premature ovarian failure, low quality eggs, loss of ovaries, and menopause. To find a donated egg, people can use an egg bank, advertising, or a known egg donor

such as a friend or family member. In order to be a donor, depending on the state or country of donation, certain criteria apply such as age restriction, good current health, the absence of hereditary diseases, and, in certain cases, consent to comply with non-disclosure of identity rules.

The donation starts with the donor receiving fertility drugs to stimulate their ovaries. Then, the sedated donor’s eggs are removed through transvaginal ultrasound aspiration, by which the doctor inserts a tube attached to an ultrasound probe into the donor’s vagina before using a suctioning needle to target each ovary for its eggs. After a few hours of recovery in the hospital, the donor may return home. Once the egg is harvested, it is fertilized with sperm, and after 48-72 hours, once fertilization and cell division have had a chance to occur, the egg is placed into the recipient’s uterus using a catheter. The process of fertilizing an egg outside of a human body is known as in vitro fertilization, or IVF, and may or may not include sperm or egg cells (gametes) donated from other people, i.e. the gametes could come from the will-be parents themselves who have healthy sex cells but a physical hindrance blocking conception.

### NIYOGA

The Vedas, foundational texts of Hinduism, include a provision for a type of sperm donation called niyoga. Niyoga was practiced in two situations: first, when a husband was infertile, and second, when the husband had died before the wife has birthed a son. In either case, the wife would try to conceive a son by having sex with a man besides her husband--most typically a brother or other relative of her husband.

While this practice may seem to violate expectations of marital chastity, niyoga was accepted by some Hindus because the “need for the survival of the lineage supersedes the mores of sexual chastity,” and the act could only be performed under certain circumstances. Specifically, the act was required to be dispassionate, so as to not breach a marriage contract. Another

restriction applied to the extent to which niyoga could be used. Since niyoga was specifically meant to produce heirs for the family (the importance of which will be discussed later), it was not meant as an excuse for sex for pleasure, and only one or two sons could permissibly be produced through niyoga. Additionally, if a woman already had a son and produced another son with her brother-in-law, that second son was considered a “child of lust.” Clearly, then, niyoga was a highly regulated practice.

Not everyone within the Hindu community ubiquitously accepted niyoga, but its existence does show that the culture accepted varying ways of having children. Ultimately, people stopped practicing niyoga because it did not stand up to increasingly strict standards for “marital chastity and devotion.”

### THE PARTIES INVOLVED

The parties involved in gamete donation are the parents, the donor, and the progeny. Of course, other parties such as extended family and doctors and nurses are also involved, and will be considered throughout this article, but they play a peripheral role. The parents, i.e. the people hoping for a pregnancy, and who will ostensibly raise the child, commence the conception-searching process; the donor helps the process along; and the progeny is the result. Each play different roles and encounter different potential ethical issues throughout the process as a result of the societies in which they exist, and the technologies of those societies.

### PARENTS

For Hindu men and women, continuing the bloodline was crucial, to the extent that it was considered the “highest duty and virtue” a person had. According to the Hindu faith, it was particularly important for a woman to carry on her husband’s bloodline with a son who could inherit property and leadership roles. Moreover, a son “could perform the *shraddha* rites, in which dead ancestors were remembered and worshipped.” After these rites were performed,

the father’s “debts” were repaid, therefore allowing him to attain *moksha*, or the escape from the “karma-run wheel of birth, death, and rebirth” called *samsara*. Because having a son was so important according to Hindu ethics, it ought to be considered a form of a Kantian perfect duty for couples, from which there was no permissible exception. However, since Hindu women were largely controlled by the men in their lives, the perfect duty to have a child falls on the backs of women. In Hinduism, women are “primarily viewed as the means for the patriarchal family to achieve its own ends.”

The pressure to have a child means Hindu women lacked complete voluntary consent in the process of niyoga. Niyoga was most likely “extremely unwelcome to a woman,” both because it “violat[e] norms of chastity” and because women could not choose their partner. The family members forcing the woman to participate in niyoga were violating the respect for individual humans that Kant’s categorical imperative requires. Specifically, a woman complying with her husband’s request to partake in niyoga was viewed as obedient, and thereby fulfilling an important duty to her husband. Combining societal and filial pressure with the potentially unwelcome nature of niyoga meant that women were not “sufficiently free of internal and external constraints,” two necessary elements of voluntary consent.

Modern Euro-American women do not generally face the same degree of pressure as their ancient Hindu counterparts to create property heirs through male offspring. They may, however have a similar type of pressure to enter motherhood. As Susan Sherwin, a 21st century Canadian ethicist, argues, women are coerced into motherhood because they are often told by society that they have few other options to have a meaningful life -- they lack access to satisfying jobs, are not the focus of their romantic relationships, and are conditioned to distrust others. According to Sherwin, a child, however, offers purpose in their lives. It is odd in her society for adults to become closely attached to a

child who is not their own, so parenthood is necessary. Moreover, children are seen as objects of ownership in that society, also contributing to the strangeness of sharing a child with someone else. The view of children belonging to parents is another factor influencing women to bear their own children, which might cause women to seek the use of IVF over, say adoption.

Besides Sherwin's view that this vein of assisted reproductive technology exists in a highly oppressive society, the actual process of egg donation itself may be oppressive. In the case of confidential egg donation, women do not necessarily have control regarding whose eggs they receive. A woman might be able to select her donor from a list of anonymous women that includes information about their characteristics. However, "authoritative others" such as nurses, doctors, or entire medical teams might match donors with the recipients. Additionally, some, such as Robyn Rowland, argue "Biological technology is in the hands of men," meaning men are the ones developing and implementing these technologies, furthering the idea that women lack their own control in the process.

## DONORS

Two unique parts of the process for donors are intention and intimacy. Male niyoga donors had a social expectation to fulfill, much like the women of the time. The donors were chosen authoritatively by family members, and were most often brothers or other family members of the woman's husband. Consideration of the situation of the niyogin, the donor, is seldom, if ever, included in literature on the practice. It would seem, though, that the niyogin also has a duty to fulfill this request by authority figures since they are a member of society and have a stake in the success of their family. Because of this, however, the niyogin is also not acting entirely of their own volition.

Hindu ethical constraints laid out the specifics of the niyoga process for the sperm "donor." The Laws of Manu strictly accept niyoga as a dispassionate duty; it is not a breach of a stringent marriage contract

between husband and wife. According to certain Hindu teachings, however, "normal" individuals cannot be created "from a 'conception devoid of love.'" While this judgment was cast in reference to modern day IVF, the same sentiment may be considered in the context of niyoga, which, if passionless, is also surely loveless. Concessions are made for niyoga, however, because desperate times—i.e. infertility—call for desperate measures. Because, as Crawford finds, "Hinduism places greater merit on motivations than on passions," the motivation to produce offspring trumps the lack of passion in a niyoga conception.

Passion was a concern for the niyoga process because the technology of the time only allowed for an intimate, sexual experience to produce a child. There was no non-sexual, non-intimate way to fertilize an egg, either inside or outside of a woman, as there is for the process of modern sperm donation. The niyogin was required to have sex with their brother's wife to fulfill their duty, a process that may have also been unwelcome to the niyogin.

Nowadays, not only can men donate their sperm without ever making contact with the recipient, but women can also donate their eggs to an unknown beneficiary. The intention to donate becomes less of a duty to family members and more of an autonomous act for the woman for other reasons. The reasons a woman might donate her eggs to a bank or fertility company, not knowing with whom they might ultimately end up, are (1) beneficence and (2) compensation.

Sometimes, a woman might donate her eggs because her infertile friend or family member asks for her eggs. This, of course, puts the woman in a sticky situation – to endure the potential hardship of donating eggs or to say no to a family member? Although under pressure, the woman is not under societal expectations to offer her body to family as is the case of the niyogin.

Many egg donor stories tout the rewarding nature of the process. For example, one woman did not want kids of her own but knew the joy they could bring people, so she donated her eggs for someone in need. Another

woman knew she could make a lasting impact in this world that was, she believed, for the better. Despite the discomfort and hassle associated with donating, some women feel that the “good deed” of egg donation was justified because it assists those who cannot conceive on their own.

While beneficence is an admirable reason to donate eggs, women might also be trying to make money, since the typical compensation for one round of donation ranges anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Some believe that, when considering the time and effort spent, as well as possible risks, this money does little more than provide breakeven compensation for the pain, risk, and inconvenience of the donation process. Additionally, others claim that most egg donors are not poor, so their actions are likely motivated, at least in part, by altruism. However, the fact that advertisements seeking egg donors appear in university newspapers (places where students are under the pressure to pay tuition) and explicitly state how much donors can make, it is hard to believe that money has little to do with the decision to donate. According to Dr. Aaron Levine, who has studied egg donation ads in university newspapers, “The concern is that some young women may choose to donate against their own best interests... They’ll look at the money on offer and will overlook some of the risks.”

The risks of donating eggs are substantial. The physical danger of donating eggs results from the fertility drug side effects (swelling in the abdomen, pressure and tension near the ovaries, as well as other rare but serious conditions) and the surgery process’ side effects (organ damage, anesthesia complications, infection, etc.). Moreover, psychological damage such as distress and regret is also possible. When the influence of financial compensation causes a woman to overlook these issues, she is not acting in an entirely autonomous and consensual way.

## PROGENY

While the resulting progeny of gamete donation are not affected by the previously raised ethical concerns,

they may face their own issues related to the categorical imperative. Most notably, children may be left in the dark about their status of being donor-conceived.

It is unclear in *niyoga* whether the child is told of their status as being created by, say, their uncle, or if they are led to believe that they are the offspring of their father. If, say, the father and the uncle resemble each other very much, then the child may not have any reason to believe that they are the child of anyone else but their father. However, in the situation in which the man was dead before his wife had a chance to birth a son, the child may be cognizant that they could not possibly be the offspring of their mother’s husband and their mother.

The legal status of to whom the child “belongs” is also unclear. According to Sutherland, in some cases the legal father is taken to be the biological father whose seed has produced the child, but in other cases the legal father is the husband of the mother who delivered the child. However, according to Bhattacharyya, the child clearly belongs to the legal husband. The process of *niyoga* is considered within Hinduism as a sowing of the woman’s field, for which a planted seed is necessary to lead to procreation. Thus the question is, does ownership of the child stem from the seed from which they came (the mother), or the “owner” (according to the Hindu law of the time) of the field—the father?

Modern day donor-conceived children may have no idea that they were conceived through sperm or egg donation. Especially if a child has grown up in a two-parent household, and never been told by anyone that they are not biologically related to their mother, they may not question the circumstances of their conception. When a couple is trying to use an egg donor to conceive, as mentioned before, the doctor and her team will try to choose a donor who matches the mother’s characteristics. So an egg donor-conceived child might even resemble, to an extent, their mother.

Due to the globalized nature of the modern world, and the technology that exists within it, there are few geographic constraints on where sperm or eggs might

travel for their donation. For people who resort to using eggs from a woman living in another country, it might be very expensive to travel to and from that country. However, eggs can be frozen and transported on a plane. While with *niyoga*, the donor probably lived within the same community as the family receiving the gamete, in the modern context, the child may never meet their donor, or have any idea as to their identity.

Within the debate to tell children of their background, there are two primary perspectives. The disclosure camp argues that “individuals have a fundamental right to know the truth about their genetic origins,” while the privacy camp does not believe such a right exists, therefore supporting a parent’s decision to not tell their child about their atypical conception. Progeny have an interest in knowing their genetic heritage in order to have “accurate information about potential health problems” and to be able to make informed medical decisions. In the context of Kant’s categorical imperative, it is a perfect duty to not lie -- according to Kantian ethics, then, it is necessary for parents to disclose the history of conception to their child.

On the other hand, parents might be discouraged to tell their child of their donor-conceived status because it “might make them [the child] feel different, or put them at risk of bullying.” However, other sources point to studies concluding that withholding this information “can have negative consequences for family relationships, particularly in the areas of basic trust and identity formation for the child and guilt and anxiety for the parents.” Additionally, some medical professionals advocate for the “all or nothing” policy, in which parents conceiving through donation either tell everybody or nobody.

## CONCLUSION

*Niyoga* and egg donation exist within different cultures and times, but face many of the same potential ethical tensions. Regarding *niyoga*, the societal pressure of producing a male heir caused families to step outside

typical boundaries for conception and seek a *niyogin* with whom the wife would conceive a child. The lack of modern gamete harvesting and implantation technology meant the wife needed to have extramarital sex with the *niyogin*, though dispassionate and limited with regards to the amount of children produced. The extent of autonomy for the woman and *niyogin* are both in question, weighed against the duty for each party to contribute a son to society. Modern women may also lack complete autonomy for using assisted reproductive technologies as they might feel they need their own child in order to have meaning in life. Modern day egg donor-conceived children do not necessarily know of their situation and many families do not even know from whom the donated gamete came. The *niyoga* child’s situation is also in question -- do they know of their origins? A Kantian standpoint would require, as a perfect duty, parents to not lie to their child and tell them of this situation.

While the categorical imperative is one relevant tool for examining the tensions of gamete donation in different circumstances, it is by no means the be all end all comprehensive method that could be used. This article uses Kantian Deontology because the core tenants seem to line up with the oft-cited tensions of gamete donation. However, many different ethical frameworks exist, and each one, when used for this thought experiment, might produce different conclusions about the ethicality of these biomedical procedures or highlight additional considerations.

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## TAYLOR GINTER



SENIOR  
WIESS COLLEGE

ASIAN STUDIES &  
MATH MINOR

# Art Societies and Movements from Republican Era to Mao Era China

Avery Jordan

## ABSTRACT

In this article, the author explores the development of modern Chinese art during the revolutionary and early Mao eras. The author tracks art movements from the urban Shanghai Art Societies of the early 20th century to the politically fueled art movements stemming from the first Japanese attack on Shanghai 1932. Looking through the lens of Mao Zedong theory on mass arts, the author then examines Chinese art's transition and politicization during the 1940's, and describes both the continuities and the transformations of the early 20th century art under CCP rule. Finally this article discusses new forms of art that emerged during the Mao era, such as communally produced artworks.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the early 20th century, several new art movements developed in China, especially in urban Shanghai. These art movements had three particularly notable features. First, art was commoditized. Second, a nationalistic revival of traditional painting style, called *guohua* (国画) competed with Western-influenced art. Third, Japanese influence over artistic style, media, and technique became a driving force of artistic development. Much of the art stimulated by the active intellectual movements of early 20th century China (e.g. the New Culture, May 4th, and May 30th movements) was intended for elite intellectual audiences, rather than for the masses. In the 1940s, however, a crisis surrounding the subject and practice of art emerged. Although 20th century Chinese art was often dismissed as bourgeois during and after the CCP takeover, even after the Yan'an Forum on Arts and Literature in 1942, pre-revolution art continued to influence revolutionary art, especially the school known as "socialist realism."

This investigation has two primary goals. First, this article examines key artistic developments of early 20th century Chinese art, specifically the Shanghai movements. Subsequently, this exploration explores early 20th century artistic developments' relationships to prominent art movements during the Mao era, with a concentrated focus on the similarities and differences

between the two periods' audiences, and the intended purpose of art during the two periods. Understanding the intended audience and purpose of the two art movements and their mediums is a significant step towards conceptualizing the goals and outcomes of Mao Zedong Thought as it pertains to art.

## SHANGHAI ART SOCIETIES

Although the shifts in Chinese art and literature explored in this article have roots as early as the New Literature movement of the 1890s, this investigation focuses specifically on the art world of Shanghai in the late 1920s into the 1930s. During this period, the Shanghai art scene was extraordinarily diverse, and encompassed institutions like the Shanghai Art College,<sup>1</sup> the Bee Society, and the Heavenly Horse Association, amongst others.<sup>2</sup> Three major factors contributed to the development of art societies in Shanghai.<sup>3</sup> First, newcomers to the city needed an opportunity to network with established artists. Second, a model for Western academic societies already existed in Shanghai, allowing for convenient replication and effective application of the Western model. The Bee Society, for example, would not have been able to redefine the position of traditional *guohua* ink painting in the Shanghai art world (a key aspect of the society's artistic agenda) but for the wealth and generosity of



its patrons, demonstrating the successful application of the Western “academic society” model in Shanghai.<sup>4</sup> Finally, a high concentration of the art societies created a positive feedback loop of organizational growth and development.

Guohua societies, art societies with a specific focus on nationalist guohua painting, had a public-facing image focused on lofty ideals related to nationalism and the promotion of art as high culture. These societies’ internal construction, however, was often more concerned with helping artists make a living.<sup>5</sup> The nationalist and intellectual messages promoted by the Shanghai art societies attracted the support of urban elites. Republican-era elites helped provide the requisite capital, both social and economic, to fund many of the guohua art societies.<sup>6</sup> The split focus between artistic ideology and the practical concern of supporting the artists themselves revealed early tensions, which were eventually politicized by Mao’s remarks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art (延安文艺座谈会).

The ideological development of the Shanghai school was not, however, limited to traditional Chinese guohua painting. While Shanghai artists of the early 20th Century were influenced by a variety of international sources, China’s cultural connections to Japan were the closest,<sup>7</sup> and the art societies that promoted Western painting styles, such as the Shanghai Art College, typically also promoted Japanese art practices.<sup>8</sup> However, there was noticeable tension surrounding the use of Japanese style and techniques. Female nudes, for example, were featured prominently in Japanese artwork, but were considered scandalous within Chinese art circles.<sup>9</sup> In addition to differences in the social perception and acceptance of artworks, guohua painting societies (which were often inherently nationalist) tended to compete with groups promoting Japanese art practice.<sup>10</sup> Even though some groups were openly supportive of Japanese art practices, some art societies were exclusively nationalist and deemed the use of Japanese art models and ideology suspicious. The suspicion and distrust of Japan was greatly exacerbated

by Japan’s invasion of Manchuria, which severely damaged the relationship between the Chinese and Japanese art worlds.<sup>11</sup> Despite these controversies, Japanese art had a consistent influence on Shanghai art societies of the late 1920s, both as a collaborative and competitive force, and presented a much closer “Western” cultural connection to the Chinese art world than European art did. The fact that Shanghai art societies drew upon Japanese artistic traditions helps define one of the more art-theoretical purposes of the early 20th century art societies: to experiment with new artistic styles.

Although guohua societies shaped one artistic element of Shanghai art culture in the 1920s and ‘30s, Japanese artists and artistic styles constituted the second major area of development in the Shanghai art scene. A 1929 art exhibition, though vaguely nationalist in nature,<sup>12</sup> displayed post-1911 Chinese paintings alongside Japanese oil paintings.<sup>13</sup> Shanghai was an optimal location for such an exhibition because of the city’s relative stability; Shanghai was both sheltered from the warlord violence that had disrupted other parts of China, and, at least in geographic part, governed by the relatively stable treaty port system.<sup>14</sup> Art societies in Japan were already well-established by the time they were invited to attend the 1929 exhibition, and were able to provide essential structure and support to the fledgling Chinese art society movement.<sup>15</sup>

Derived in part from Western art and in part from Japanese models, a third movement that shaped the artistic circles of late Republican Shanghai was the woodcut movement. Lu Xun, a prominent modern Chinese writer author and artist, had a pronounced influence over the woodcut movement, ranging from publishing Western examples of woodcuts, to later organizing artists and popularizing the movement and its works.<sup>16</sup> Lu Xun helped push the woodcut movement towards mass recognition and out of the “patron-artist closed circuit” of patrons buying artists’ works without the artwork ever being available to society at large. Notably, the woodcut movement’s rise

to popularity came from somber, nationalist origins. The Japanese attack on Shanghai in January 1932 caused a massive setback for the development of the Chinese art movement, in part because the art materials (such as studios and galleries) were destroyed.<sup>17</sup>

### THE WOODCUT MOVEMENT

One way that the art world coped with these losses was through the woodcut movement. Following the Japanese attack on Shanghai, art circles began to recognize woodcut paintings as a serious art form, and they showed a major shift in the subject matter of paintings, mainly focusing on devastation and war themes.<sup>18</sup> A separate group of Shanghai art societies' *raison d'être* was promoting the woodcut movement in the early 1930's. For example, artists who were part of the Spring Field Painting Society began to represent worker struggles in their paintings, such as in *Weavers on the March*.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Wooden Bell Woodcut Research Society explored the popular perception and conceptualization of woodcut art, claiming it had a "public nature."<sup>20</sup> The movement, groups of people, and the quotidian were hallmarks of Chinese woodcut painting,<sup>21</sup> presenting a stark contrast<sup>i</sup> to traditional dramatic landscape paintings<sup>ii</sup> depicting vast, misty scenes, and the *guohua*<sup>iii</sup> movement. Despite the rather popular beginnings of woodblock art in China, later woodblock societies began to have a more ideological and intellectual bent. The early 1930's "Storm Society, for instance, was woodblock print group dedicated to maintaining and promoting a "modernist aesthetic."<sup>22</sup>

Woodblock prints, particularly those created in response to the first Japanese attack on Shanghai, featured themes including mass suffering and identity. Following the Yan'an Conference, and the rise of the CCP, another type of print called *nianhua* (年画) became highly relevant. Although developed several decades before the Yan'an Conference, *nianhua* served as a rural parallel to the Lu Xun-organized woodcut movement in urban Shanghai.<sup>23</sup> The *nianhua* prints were an informal art movement derived from the

practice and values of the people,<sup>24</sup> so it is unsurprising that Mao and the CCP were interested in using *nianhua* for promoting mass line politics. The CCP hoped not only to understand folk art, but also use it to foster more effective communication with the masses, a cornerstone of Mao's "mass line" ideology.<sup>25</sup> The *nianhua* movement was one part of Mao's goal of understanding the language of the masses and using it to communicate with them as propaganda.<sup>26</sup>

Much like woodblock prints, *nianhua* derived popular power from its ability to be mass produced. Even before the CCP recognized the power of the *nianhua* movement, the Guomindang Nationalist Party interfered with the production of *nianhua* paintings viewed as threatening or promoting old fashioned ideas.<sup>27</sup> *Nianhua* were derived from the ideas of the people; were a familiar medium to the people; were separate from the elite, urban schools of art; and were easily mass produced, making them a perfect tool of mass propaganda and implementation of the CCP's ideals of communist and socialist art.

Woodcut prints were one of the earliest inklings of mass art in Republican Shanghai, since artists and intellectuals alike realized that the woodblock print had a new element that *guohua* and oil painting did not: the ability to be mass produced by machinery.<sup>28</sup> As the ideological and elite art world of Shanghai began to recognize that popular movements were gaining traction, and as artists began placing themselves amongst "the people," art movements started to reflect popular interests. In particular, the Shanghai woodcut movement's presentation of Japan's attack on Shanghai politicized art in a new way for China. A fundamental shift in artistic purpose and audience occurred while art for the people garnered more attention than theoretical art. Woodblock art was created for a practical purpose (the anti-Japanese war effort), and was both received and - perhaps more critically - understood by the masses. This new model of purpose and audience resonated beyond the attacks in Shanghai, and helped shaped the future CCP policy on art.

## MAO ZEDONG THEORY ON MASS ARTS

Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist party formally took control of China in 1949, but prior to this political takeover, Mao and his brain trust had been formulating CCP ideology for years. In 1942, at the Yan'an Forum on Arts and Literature, Mao outlined the party's ideology regarding art. Mao identified a principal problem: works of art and literature (and their associated movements) concerned themselves primarily with the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who produced them. According to Mao's interpretation of Marxist thought, however, art and literature should first be for workers, peasants, and soldiers, and only subsequently for the petty-bourgeois urbanites and intellectuals. Mao believed that ordinary people should be consistently praised in artworks, and that art should function to criticize "petty-bourgeois" ideas. Art and literature, according to Maoist thought, ought to eulogize the proletariat's fight against petty-bourgeois ideas. In order for art to fit within the parameters of socialism, the audience for art must shift from capitalists (shopkeepers, intelligentsia, etc.) to the people (peasants, workers, and other oppressed parties). According to Mao's remarks at the Yan'an Forum, art produced by the bourgeois is inherently difficult for the masses to understand because it does not and cannot appeal to the masses; therefore, a "mass style" must be created for the correct audience. Mao espoused the view that to help facilitate the creation of the new style of mass art and literature, all writers and artists should have a basic understanding of Marxism - Leninism, and should transform their art to emphasize common themes from Marxist thought. For example, Mao believed that authors writing from the heart and on topics of "love" should rephrase their works to focus on class love and class struggle. Additionally, Marxism fundamentally teaches that intuition and reasoning should come from practical experience and not theory, which is a stark contrast to many of the intellectually

driven avant-garde art movements at the time of the communist revolution. In relation to contemporary art movements, Mao acknowledged that the community of artists does not always take the correct "stand" in relation to the party ideology. The urban schools of art were largely intellectual in nature and did not directly appeal to popular interests or learn from "practice" as the CCP suggested. The Shanghai Art College in particular emphasized the guohua style: a contemporary response to Western art. However, some elements of the urban schools of art did transform to better meet Mao's ideological requirements for mass art of the party, namely the woodblock movement.

Another way that the CCP vision of art outlined at Yan'an was implemented was through collectively produced artworks. Attempts at collectivization and establishment of a group of artists had been attempted since the Republican period,<sup>29</sup> and collective work production was common during Mao's early communist era.<sup>30</sup> A combination of factors led to the rise to prominence of popular socialist art by the end of the Republican period and into the Communist period. First, Japanese infringement on Chinese territory in Manchuria during the 1930s inspired a new wave of nationalism within intellectual circles, and second, the CCP's rise to prominence during the 1930s and Mao's talks at Yan'an laid the foundation for how artists came to be integrated into mass movements, including creating art through collective efforts.<sup>31</sup> Ideologically, collective production was also an opportunity to incorporate multiple levels of minority voices and representation into a single work of art.<sup>32</sup>

The idea of socialist artistic collectivity spanned every aspect of art: production, medium, subject matter, publicity, and beyond.<sup>33</sup> In terms of production, every stage was collective, from the initial brainstorming, to the feedback on ideas, to the actual creation of the work.<sup>34</sup> One particularly apt example of collective artwork is *The People Eat for Free*,<sup>iv</sup> the creation of which was directed by revolutionary artist Fu Baoshi. *The People Eat for Free* depicted the abundance and

glorious benefits of communism, a contrast to the struggle often depicted in other socialist art works.<sup>35</sup> Fu directed the creation of the work, but many individuals contributed to its collective production. As a final mark of the work's collectivity, Fu Baoshi created an artist's seal, traditionally used as an individual artist's signature, with the markings "collective work," which he used to sign *The People Eat for Free*.<sup>36</sup> Collective art often emphasized the collective as a subject,<sup>37</sup> including *The People Eat for Free's* depiction of the masses enjoying food and festively dining.

Collective art was commissioned at a massive scale for example, 1,067,763 art works were expected to be produced during the most intense years of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>38</sup> Part of the "collective" nature of collective artwork was manifested by such artworks' execution in a collective and consistent style, a marked contrast to the multitude of styles displayed during the Republic period.<sup>39</sup> The collectively produced works not only exhibited subject matter relevant to the masses, and produced media acceptable to Maoist ideology, but also directly embodied the spirit of collectivity in their production. Recall that the purpose of collective art under CCP ideology is primarily political. Since part of the new artistic purpose was to communicate the party's policies to the masses and produce art for the masses, massive scale was required.

As the CCP encouraged a new movement of mass political art, other genres of Chinese art, such as traditional ink painting, modernist art, and religious art, became illegal or repressed because of their perceived contradictions to the mass line of the CCP.<sup>40</sup> Ink paintings in particular were not considered revolutionary enough, likely because they used a traditional medium (and appealed to traditionally elite audiences).<sup>41</sup> CCP policy determined that Soviet Socialist art would become a major artistic factor in the new Chinese art styles after the revolution,<sup>42</sup> but this initial art policy shifted slightly after the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, and the result was a different, uniquely Chinese implementation of socialist realism.<sup>43</sup> Socialist

realism as art internalizes the ideology of socialism to render itself realist,<sup>44</sup> but the particular aesthetic requirements were not specific. Socialist realism's aesthetic style was not adopted to the same extremes as by the Soviet Union, since features of earlier Chinese art often remained in socialist realist art produced during the Mao-era.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, nianhua and woodblock prints were produced with socialist themes, but not always the aesthetic style of socialist realism.<sup>46</sup> For example, the worker artists at the No. 2 Car Manufacturing Plant produced a woodblock print<sup>v</sup> in black and white, a contrast to the often vibrant colors of socialist realist art.

Despite the backlash against more traditional forms of art and the CCP's expressed interest in socialist realism, some comparatively traditional Chinese art survived the 1949 revolution. This came in the form of the continuation of the guohua movement from the late 1920s and early 1930s. At its start, the guohua movement was a breakaway from government directed and commissioned artworks as seen in earlier periods.<sup>47</sup> According to Jane Zheng, the Shanghai Art College (one of the earliest promoters of the new guohua movement) treated the guohua style as neither "Western impact and Chinese response" nor the "invention of tradition,"<sup>48</sup> meaning that while the Shanghai Art College did often use Western art techniques and pedagogical practices,<sup>49</sup> it was able to indigenize them in a way that made guohua neither entirely new nor entirely Western. Western techniques derived from watercolor painting (which, after all, shared similarities with guohua<sup>50</sup>) were integrated into the Shanghai Art College's curriculum, and influenced the generation of Shanghai guohua painters who were painting at the time of the revolution. The Shanghai school worked to make guohua painting more popular, leading to an interesting conflict between popularization, nationalism, and western influence. In part, guohua was indeed a response to Western influence. It incorporated Western technique, but in a uniquely Chinese fashion. Clearly, the fact that the Shanghai Art College wanted

to spread and create art for China that contrasted with the West aligned with CCP art policy, but the incorporation of Western Bourgeois artistic technique and theory constituted a major contradiction.<sup>51</sup>

The tension and contradiction between guohua and the CCP's art directives remained extant, but did not prevent publicly prominent artists from creating works in the guohua style. Fu Baoshi, for example, was a modern master of guohua-style ink painting.<sup>52</sup> Despite the overall push for Socialist Realism, Fu maintained a degree of artistic independence and continued to paint guohua-style paintings even after 1949. Although Fu studied in Japan and visited Europe, he refrained from using these styles prominently in his own work. His early work was primarily landscape paintings, but he later transitioned to painting a variety of subject matter, including national hero poets and Red Army action paintings.<sup>53</sup>

Qi Baishi was another prominent artist who did not completely adhere to the suggestions of the Yan'an forum. Qi's art has five prominent characteristics: commonplace subjects, use of classical painting ideas, combination of meticulous and general brushstrokes, calligraphy, and a focus on leaves and flowers.<sup>54</sup> Qi's work often included human figures. Clearly, Qi's use of commonplace subjects, such as shrimp, one of his favorites, would be satisfactory in the eyes of Marxist leaders dictating the message and purpose of art in China. However, the use of guohua style ink painting that recalls tradition might have been scandalous had it not been for Qi's popularity. Similarly, Fu Baoshi's nationalist and Marxist subject matter, although painted in guohua style, balanced the controversy of the style's use. The guohua movement itself did not meet the CCP's new requirements for mass audience and political purpose. However, through Fu Baoshi, Qi Baishi, and other popular artists, guohua style artworks were still employed during the early Mao era.

## CONCLUSION

Art in China was shaped by multiple influences of

the early 20th century, and when transitioning across era boundaries from the Republican to the Communist era, art developed across several different paths. The influence of late 1920s and early 1930s Shanghai art schools contributed to a battle of multiple forms of modernism; woodblock prints, guohua revival, and ink painting all vied for influence and recognition during the late republican era art scene. The Japanese attack on Shanghai catalyzed the new political and mass art movements, and Mao's talks at Yan'an outlined ideological requirements and goals for increasingly politicized art during the communist era. While the socialist realist style imported from the Soviet Union was adopted to an extent, not all art conformed to that style. In fact, many movements from the Republican era adapted to the new goals of political and mass art, while maintaining their earlier styles; both guohua and woodblock art were widely employed with new themes after the 1949 revolution.

## ART LOG



## NOTES

1. Zheng
2. Chan, 555
3. Ibid, 547
4. Ibid, 556-557
5. Ibid, 550
6. Ibid, 542
7. Zheng, 157
8. Ibid, 163
9. Fogel, 184, 188
10. Chan, 551
11. Fogel, 203
12. Ibid, 183
13. Ibid, 181
14. Ibid, 182
15. Ibid, 204

16. Tang, 100, 127
17. Ibid, 120
18. Ibid, 121
19. Ibid, 122
20. Ibid, 136
21. Ibid, 123, 127
22. Ibid, 131
23. Flath, 134
24. Ibid, 131
25. Ibid, 134
26. Ibid, 139
27. Ibid, 132
28. Tang, 120
29. Ho, 349
30. Ibid, 348
31. Ibid, 352
32. Ibid, 353
33. Ibid, 349
34. Ibid, 356
35. Ibid, 350
36. Ibid, 348
37. Ibid, 361
38. Ibid, 363
39. Ibid, 357
40. Andrews, 228
41. Chiu, 10
42. Andrews, 228
43. Ibid, 230
44. Liu, Lu, 1
45. Chiu, 61
46. Ibid, 62
47. Chan, 542
48. Zheng, 169
49. Ibid, 143
50. Ibid, 145
51. Ibid, 165
52. Chung - no p.
53. Ibid - no p.
54. Erickson - p. intro

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# AVERY JORDAN



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# Resource Diplomacy: The Dynamics Between Japan's Energy Policy and Foreign Policy

Aaron Huang

## ABSTRACT

As a global power and one of the world's largest energy importers, Japanese energy policy and foreign policy are critical to its economic and political status and health. This article explores the dynamic between Japan's energy policy decisions and foreign policy imperatives, with the ultimate goal of answering the following question: How does Japan's energy policy shape its foreign policy? This investigation argues that Japan's energy policy, particularly Tokyo's energy security imperative, heavily drives Japanese foreign policy. This finding is echoed by the late Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone's 1973 (post-oil crisis) remark, "oil is a critical resource for Japan and dealings in oil cannot be handled by individual Japanese enterprises or traders alone... the Japanese government will involve itself in strong continuous petroleum diplomacy in the future."<sup>1</sup> Former Foreign Minister Aso shared Nakasone's sentiment when he stated that energy security is an indispensable subject in foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, I expand on this dynamic and claim that Japan is at a point where this influence should be reversed: as Japan attempts to reduce reliance on Middle Eastern energy supply, foreign policy can and should now drive energy policy.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this essay, I begin with an overview of Japan's current energy situation. I discuss the types and sources of Japan's energy, the actors in the Japanese energy arena, and Japan's dilemma between pursuing enhanced energy security and achieving climate change goals. I then describe how energy policy has historically driven foreign policy using Middle Eastern case studies. Next, I reason that Japan is at a state of transition where foreign policy can and should now guide its energy policy, rather than the other way around. I argue, using Northeast Asian case studies, that Japan can more effectively fulfill its energy security goal by using foreign policy to strengthen relations with its geographic neighbors. I conclude by highlighting the importance of communication and understanding in Japan's foreign relations and exploring the potential challenges that lie ahead in Japan's foreign policy endeavors to achieve energy security.

## OVERVIEW OF JAPAN'S ENERGY LANDSCAPE

Japan currently imports 85 percent of its energy needs, the highest percentage among any large industrialized country, and 90 percent of Japan's power generation is supplied by fossil fuels.<sup>3,4</sup> Thus, Japan remains one of the weakest nations in terms of energy security, with a meager energy self-sufficiency rate of four percent.<sup>5</sup> Due to its deteriorating trade imbalance (caused in large part by expensive fossil fuel imports) and depreciating yen, Japan is making a concerted effort to secure stable energy supplies at a reasonable rate.<sup>6</sup> Part of this effort is its campaign to diversify energy types and sources.

## TYPES OF ENERGY

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), Japan is the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) importer, second largest coal importer, and third largest crude oil importer.



Japan's total energy consumption mix is as follows: 44 percent petroleum and other liquids, 27 percent coal, 22 percent natural gas, one percent nuclear, and six percent hydro/renewables.<sup>7</sup>

### ENERGY SOURCES (COUNTRIES/REGIONS)

The following statistics are presented by Toshikazu Okuya, the Director of Energy Supply and Demand Policy Office at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI):<sup>8</sup>

#### *NATURAL GAS*

Japan receives the majority of its natural gas from Australia (20.5 percent of total natural gas imports), Qatar (18.4 percent), and Malaysia (16.7 percent). Though substantial, Japan imports only 9.8 percent of its natural gas from its close neighbor, Russia. Indonesia (7.2 percent), Brunei (6.8 percent), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (6.2 percent), and Oman (4.6 percent) account for the rest of the imports. Notably, Japan's natural gas imports are 34 percent dependent on the Strait of Malacca and 25 percent on the Strait of Hormuz.

#### *CRUDE OIL*

Japan obtains an overwhelming 83 percent of its crude oil from the Middle East: 31.8 percent from Saudi Arabia, 22.1 percent from UAE, 12.7 percent from Qatar, and 16.3 percent from other Middle Eastern countries. Russia provides only 7.3 percent of Japan's crude oil imports., Japan's crude oil imports are dangerously dependent on transit through the Strait of Malacca (83 percent ) and the Strait of Hormuz (81 percent ).

### ACTORS (STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES)

The Japanese government tightly controls the energy supply. As a result, the energy actors consist mainly of government agencies, state owned enterprises (SOE), and private firms with immense government support. Japan Oil, Gas, and Metals National Corporation

(JOGMEC), established in 2004, is responsible for securing stable oil and natural gas supply. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), to provide a stable supply of resources, supports businesses in resource development and acquisition in the upstream sector. Both SOEs finance projects overseas: the JOGMEC funds energy-related projects, and the JBIC subsidizes infrastructure projects in energy-producing countries.<sup>9</sup> The downstream power sector includes ten regional monopolies, including Osaka Gas, Tokyo Gas, and Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO).<sup>10</sup>

### ENERGY DILEMMA

Japan's energy policy dilemma is a delicate balance between enhancing energy security and meeting climate change objectives. Low prices in oil and coal have helped Japan secure considerable amounts of energy supplies, but oil and coal are environmentally damaging when burned, compared to other fuels. On the other hand, nuclear power emits insignificant amounts of greenhouse gases, but its popularity plummeted after the Fukushima disaster. One solution to this dilemma is expanding the acquisition of natural gas, a fossil fuel relatively cleaner than oil and coal (discussed later in this essay).

### ENERGY POLICY DRIVING FOREIGN POLICY

Since the oil crises of the 1970s, Japan's energy policy, through its energy security priority, has molded its foreign policy.<sup>11</sup> Because of Japan's severe energy dependence, securing Japanese energy security has become one of foreign policy's key purposes. In the Basic Law of Energy of Japan, the government declares energy security as a core public policy objective.<sup>12</sup> METI's 4th Energy Plan expands this objective to include stable supply and cost reduction.<sup>13</sup> Impacted by the energy policy stated above, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) 2015 Diplomatic Bluebook states that it is critical for Japan to take "steps to ensure a stable supply of resources at reasonable prices".<sup>14</sup> MOFA has attempted to achieve this energy security

goal by strengthening comprehensive and mutually beneficial bilateral ties with energy-rich Middle Eastern countries, using official development assistance (ODA) and political and economic support.<sup>15</sup>

### MIDDLE EAST OVERALL

Around 89.2 percent of Japan's crude oil imports come from the Middle East, with 76.4 percent coming specifically from the Persian Gulf states.<sup>16</sup> To support Japan's energy policy of securing Middle Eastern oil imports, Japan's foreign policy has been active in solidifying bilateral relations with energy-rich countries in the Middle East. For example, amid sanctions against Iran and at the risk of publicly alienating the U.S., its chief ally, Japan has sustained its relationship with Iran by holding high-level bilateral discussions on security issues, business contracts, and cultural exchanges.<sup>17</sup>

Historically, Japan has had a record of using foreign policy to maintain its relations with energy partners. When the Iran-Iraq War placed Mitsui Co. Ltd's Iran-Japan Petrochemical Company at risk, Japan acted as the diplomatic contact between Iraq's and Iran's leaders, and voiced Iran's grievances at the 1983 UN General Assembly in an attempt to combat what Tokyo perceived as an international bias against Iran.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, during the 1973 oil crisis, Japan supported Planestine to curry favor with its Middle Eastern energy suppliers.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Japan has launched an "all-Japan" diplomatic effort to strengthen its relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its members to maintain stable energy supplies;<sup>20</sup> economically, MOFA has negotiated large-scale infrastructure projects and a free trade agreement while culturally, MOFA has introduced Japanese culture, language, and traditional sports to promote a Japanese business culture.<sup>21</sup> Another foreign policy tool Japan utilizes is ODA provision. ODA is used to acquire Arab goodwill, secure oil flows, and stabilize the region's troubled spots. Japan believes that ODA increases social stability by supporting social infrastructure construction, promoting industry,

and balancing development between oil-rich and oil-poor states, judging that the imbalance may cause upheaval.<sup>22</sup>

### CASE STUDY: QATAR

Qatar is the world's leading LNG supplier, and Japan is the world's largest LNG importer. Japan is also Qatar's first and top LNG importer, receiving 37 billion dollars' worth of export from Qatar in 2013. As such, their deep LNG relationship has spilled over to effect concrete bilateral relations, and Japan's energy policy has influenced its foreign policy to consolidate this consumer-supplier relationship. In 2011, Japanese and Qatari foreign ministers issued a joint statement recognizing the importance of oil and LNG to both economies and the need to reinforce bilateral political and economic relations.<sup>23</sup>

Since 1998, Japan has given 264 million yen for disaster relief aid and 1.072 billion yen for technical cooperation. As for bilateral visits, Japan has sent foreign ministers, METI ministers (e.g. Kazuyoshi Akaba), and even Prime Minister Abe to Qatar to further improve relations.<sup>24</sup> Through the Japan-Qatar Joint Economic Committee, the Japanese government has supported Japanese companies to invest in Qatari projects, including 2022 World Cup infrastructure projects and the Doha West Bay Automated People Mover transportation project. Other business projects promoted by the Japanese government include a bilateral investment forum, the Qatar National Food Program, and the Qatar Electric Water Company's desalination projects. The Japanese government has also engaged in its own initiatives. They consist of irrigated agricultural technology sharing, education and human development cooperation, and cultural exchanges such as creating art and heritage exhibitions and promoting Japanese language education.<sup>25</sup> These initiatives show how energy policy has driven foreign policy to engage in relationship-building with multiple aspects of the Qatari society.

## CASE STUDY: SAUDI ARABIA

According to Japan's Ministry of Finance, Saudi Arabia is Japan's most essential crude oil supplier, exporting 5015.28 billion yen's worth of crude oil/liquefied petroleum gas to Japan in 2014. Saudi Arabia exports 1.16 million barrels a day to Japan, 31.8 percent of Japan's total crude imports. This energy relationship dates back to 1957, when Saudi Arabia granted Arabian Oil Company, a Japanese firm, the right to extract Saudi petroleum.<sup>26</sup> Due to the significance of this energy relationship, MOFA has deployed enormous resources to fortify bilateral relations.

In terms of foreign visits, dignitaries such as the Crown Prince, prime ministers Fukuda and Abe, and Foreign Minister Gemba have all made trips to Saudi Arabia to strengthen bilateral relations. Japan has signed bilateral agreements on economic and technical cooperation (1975), air services (2009), and avoiding double taxation and preventing tax evasion (2011). Prime ministers and foreign ministers have themselves undertaken initiatives. Under Prime Minister Obuchi in 1998, the two countries signed the "Japan-Saudi Arabia Cooperation Agenda" to further consolidate relations. In 2001, Foreign Minister Kono began to implement the Agenda and announced initiatives on promoting dialogue with the Islamic world and developing water resources.<sup>27</sup> Foreign Minister Aso later advanced projects such as automobile technology sharing and a women's empowerment program to teach Saudi women the fundamentals of starting a company.<sup>28</sup> More recently (2014), Prince Salman and Prime Minister Abe issued a joint statement to collaborate on technical assistance, in which Japan would send experts to Saudi Arabia to train Saudi workers in the communications, broadcasting, mining, and manufacturing sectors.<sup>29</sup>

## REDUCING RELIANCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Japan has extensive diplomatic relations with many

Middle Eastern states because of its reliance on Middle Eastern energy resources. The Japanese government realizes its precarious energy position: Japan relies on a region that is incredibly politically volatile and on a transit route that is both treacherous and lengthy.<sup>30</sup> The Syrian Civil War, the emergence of the Islamic State, and the unstable governments of the Middle East (with weakened revenues due to low oil prices) have only made the region more unreliable. Understanding the need to diversify energy sources for energy security, Japan is aiming to ease its Middle East reliance by shifting its focus to other suppliers. Foreign policy can and should drive this effort and shape Japan's energy policy as Japan reevaluates its Middle East energy policy.

## FOREIGN POLICY DRIVING ENERGY POLICY

Foreign policy has the potential to dictate energy policy, and help achieve the ultimate goal of enhanced energy security. Diplomatic breakthroughs can be realized to enhance both national and regional energy supplies. Thus far, Japan's energy policy has guided foreign policy only through "resource diplomacy,"<sup>31</sup> whereby foreign policy is involved in resource-related matters to support energy policy.<sup>32</sup> I argue, however, that Japan should conduct a new form of resource diplomacy, one in which foreign policy opens doors for energy policy by engaging in issues that may not be directly energy-related. For example, by using foreign policy to resolve territorial disputes, Japan can, based on friendly relations, promote bilateral and multilateral energy cooperation with Russia, China, and South Korea and engage in resource diplomacy with not only energy suppliers but also energy consumers. In this essay, I focus on Northeast Asia where conflicts are plenty, but diplomatic and energy opportunities are boundless.

Recently, geopolitical tensions have simmered in Northeast Asia. Japan has sovereignty issues with many of its neighbors and is viewed by China and South

Korea, who have stirred up nationalistic vigor to smear Japan's image, as a nation reverting to pre-World War II militarism.<sup>33</sup> Unresolved historical grievances, sea lane control conflicts, and the race to acquire energy supplies have soured Japan's relations with its neighbors and created a competitive atmosphere in Northeast Asia.<sup>34</sup> Persevering diplomacy is needed to resolve these conflicts and help Northeast Asian countries grasp their common goal of energy security. Through cooperation, these countries can increase energy market power, reduce risks and costs, and accomplish their shared objective of moving away from Middle East energy.

## CASE STUDY ON CHINA

### CURRENT CONFLICT(S) AND POSSIBLE RESOLUTION(S)

As two of the world's foremost energy importers, China and Japan have extraordinary opportunities to cooperate and ensure energy security together. Nonetheless, the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute has deeply exacerbated the fragile relations between the two countries.<sup>35</sup> The dispute dates back to when the United States, under strong protest from China, returned the Senkaku Islands to Japan in the Okinawa Reversion Treaty after World War II.<sup>36</sup> Ever since, the two sides have aggravated each other in the East China Sea, worsening the historical grievances and distrust. China used gunboats to force out Japanese vessels and explored potential oil fields without notifying Japan.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, Japan arrested Chinese fishermen for violating the exclusive economic zone and unilaterally purchased the disputed islands.<sup>38,39</sup> Underlying these incidents is a massive struggle for the potential energy resources in the East China Sea.<sup>40</sup> Fanning the flames, Japan and China are also intensifying their rivalry over the energy resources in Eastern Siberia.<sup>41</sup>

Patient diplomacy and frank communication are required to resolve the territorial dispute and overcome the distrust that has fueled nationalistic sentiments.

The stalemate will benefit neither side, and compromise is necessary. The Japanese government should communicate the benefits of resolving this dispute (discussed below) both to the Chinese government and the Chinese public. Japan can offer an olive branch by supporting China's membership into the International Energy Agency (IEA). Through this membership, China can obtain expertise on energy efficiency, demand management, technology, and policymaking.<sup>42</sup> This would signal Japan's willingness to work with China, build goodwill, and start a meaningful conversation on their conflicts.

### POTENTIAL PROJECT(S) BASED ON FRIENDLY RELATIONS

Once foreign policy has paved the way for friendly relations, Japan's energy actors can utilize this opportunity to jointly explore the East China Sea with China. Studies have shown the potential abundant oil and natural gas deposits in the East China Sea: the EIA estimates between one to two trillion cubic feet of proved and probable natural gas reserves and 200 million barrels of oil in proved and probable reserves.<sup>43</sup> Given both countries' interest in hydrocarbon resources, they can jointly invest and explore the Shirakaba, Asunaro, and Kashi gas fields. Because there are also studies questioning the amount of resources in this sea, a joint project would share and reduce costs and risks.

### REASON(S) FOR COOPERATION

Cost-efficiency and new energy exploration are two mutually beneficial reasons for China and Japan to cooperate. This cooperation can also symbolize China's goodwill in Asia. China needs goodwill, instead of military might that only provokes other countries, to be a stable regional and world leader. By working with Japan, a competing regional power, China can bring Japan under its influence and counter America's pivot to Asia (e.g. Trans-Pacific Partnership). For Japan, which has consistently failed to outbid China on energy supplies and projects, working with China

to create an oil purchasing block and negotiate pricing together would help Japan ensure an affordable and stable energy supply.<sup>44</sup>

## CASE STUDY: KOREA

### CURRENT CONFLICT(S) AND POSSIBLE RESOLUTION(S)

As with China, territorial disputes (e.g. Takeshima Island) and historical grievances and distrust flaring nationalistic sentiments have deteriorated Japan's relations with South Korea to an unprecedented low. This tension has thwarted bilateral currency swap expansion and the purchase of South Korean government bonds.<sup>45</sup> Japan, however, can resolve the territorial issue and regain the trust between the two peoples through geopolitical and public diplomacy. This will require a strong commitment on both sides to communicate openly and consistently. Compromise is necessary but possible when the potential benefits of a warm relationship are clearly laid out. What is vital is that the benefits are communicated to both the government and the public.

### POTENTIAL PROJECT(S) BASED ON FRIENDLY RELATIONS

As this new framework of resource diplomacy (foreign policy opening doors for energy policy by engaging in issues not directly energy-related) takes root in Japan-South Korea relations, what can yield is a colossal project proposed by Korean Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) to lay a 200-kilometer underwater power cable between Japan and South Korea.<sup>46</sup> The idea is to connect South Korea's Busan to Japan's Tsushima Island and Kyushu and potentially lay out the groundwork for a Northeast Asia power grid. While Japan's Softbank has supported this proposal, the project will require immense coordination, diplomacy, and public-private intergovernmental collaboration, all of which are only possible with friendly Japan-South Korea relations. Another viable collaboration is

utilizing and substantiating the existing Japan-South Korea Gas Dialogue.

### REASON(S) FOR COOPERATION

The first reason for their cooperation is their similar energy paradigms. Both countries are heavily dependent on energy imports and have low energy self-sufficiency ratios.<sup>47</sup> Like Japan, South Korea is 96 percent dependent on imports (especially Middle East ones) and a major LNG consumer.<sup>48</sup> The second reason for cooperation is their similar agendas. Japan and Korea are both attempting to diversify energy sources and develop alternative energy sources, and both are interested in energy development projects in the Russian Far East.<sup>49</sup> The two countries can benefit enormously by jointly pursuing their similar energy security agendas. Through joint effort, they can develop alternative energy more efficiently, attain greater bargaining power, and possibly counteract some of China's recent assertive foreign policy.

## CASE STUDY: RUSSIA

### CURRENT CONFLICT(S) AND POSSIBLE RESOLUTION(S)

The Japan-Russia dispute over the Kuril Islands has undermined potentially warm energy relations and has prevented Moscow and Tokyo from signing a formal peace treaty.<sup>50</sup> By the end of 2000s, the Kremlin became increasingly anti-Japanese due to what Russians perceived as Japan's "implacable position on the territorial dispute over the Kuril Islands."<sup>51</sup> Not only should Japan engage in continuous communication and diplomacy with Russia, but Japan should also evaluate the likely gains/losses of ceding these islands. To begin dialogue, Japan can offer to purchase large amounts of LNG from Russia to entice Russia to reconsider its rigid stance on the dispute.<sup>52</sup> Compromise is necessary, but the benefits from cooperation far surpass any drawbacks.

## POTENTIAL PROJECT(S) BASED ON FRIENDLY RELATIONS

With the benefit of friendly foreign relations, one plausible energy project that would benefit both Moscow and Tokyo would be a natural gas pipeline connecting the Russian Far East to northern Japan. The initiative, suggested by Japanese legislators, plans to lay a 1350-kilometer pipeline from Russia's Sakhalin Island to Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture. While it would cost around 5.9 billion dollars, the project could yield up to 20 billion cubic meters of natural gas every year for Japan, which would account for 17 percent of Japan's current imports.<sup>53</sup> The Japanese government favors this project because the pipeline would decrease domestic natural gas costs and allow Japan to move away from Middle Eastern fossil fuels. On the other hand, Russia can, through the pipeline, get closer to its goal of shifting away from the European market.<sup>54</sup>

## REASON(S) FOR COOPERATION

There are two reasons for Russia to cooperate. First, Russia needs the Northeast Asian market to thrive. Facing costly sanctions from the West and natural gas competition from North America's shale gas revolution, Russia has clear incentives to quickly sign long-term gas contracts. Besides, diversification goes both ways. While Russia is currently enjoying the profits from working with China, it will need to diversify its customers, so it will not be beholden to China in the future. Second, Russia can draw capital from Japan to fund other Sakhalin-type projects. Russia has been struggling with investment and pipeline construction financing because of its slow progress with other projects and its opaque legal/political system.<sup>55</sup> Having Japan's funding and technology for development projects will help Russia realize its East Siberian and Russia Far Eastern reserves and bring Russia out of its precarious energy situation.<sup>56</sup> As for Japan, cooperation with Russia will considerably decrease the price it pays for natural gas by steeply cutting transportation costs. The price decreases

because a tanker journey from Nakhodka, Russia to Japan takes approximately three days while a journey from the Middle East takes 20 days through some of the world's most vulnerable water lanes (the Straits of Malacca and Hormuz).<sup>57</sup>

## MULTILATERAL ENERGY COOPERATION

While I include Russia in some potential projects, my cooperation recommendations will emphasize how China, Japan, and South Korea as the world's top energy importers can gain from multilateral cooperation to accomplish their common core objective: energy security.

## CURRENT CONFLICTS AND POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

Political tensions run high among Japan, China, South Korea, and Russia. Intensifying competition for energy resources, historical mutual distrust, territorial disputes, and diverging political ideologies are a handful of reasons why some of these countries still lack full diplomatic normalization with each other.<sup>58</sup> A zero-sum atmosphere currently dominates Northeast Asian energy security. State actors, not simply motivated by market incentives, engage in mercantil competition to outbid each other for energy supplies and projects.<sup>59</sup> The absence of a shared regional identity contributes to a dearth of multilateral institutions that can coordinate regional energy cooperation.<sup>60</sup> Public diplomacy can play a substantial role in resolving these tensions. By quelling nationalistic sentiments, public diplomacy can use civil society to affect how states work together. For example, in 2014, Taiwanese civil society organizations were able to reject a China-Taiwan trade bill and use this bill to mobilize and remove the ruling political party from power thereafter. Just as civil society can reject, it can also promote.

Japan's MOFA should utilize many foreign policy tools to mitigate this negative atmosphere. First, MOFA should host more regional business-to-business

energy summits to strengthen market incentives for energy cooperation. Second, MOFA can focus on institution-building to streamline communication and institutionalize energy cooperation. Unlike the East Asian Summit, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or ASEAN+3, which all have too many actors with drastically different goals; institutions such as the Intergovernmental Collaborative Mechanism on Energy Cooperation in North-East Asia (ECNEA), Korea-China-Japan Trilateral Energy Dialogue, and the Five-Country Energy Ministers Meeting (replacing India with Russia) have the structure necessary to avoid coordination problems that failed institutions face. By building upon these institutions, Japan can provide fora for countries to have frank discussions and improve mutual trust and confidence, two vital components of intergovernmental cooperation. Moreover, strengthening these institutions will reinforce their functions of sharing information and data, coordinating price and demand, facilitating projects, and improving technical expertise.<sup>61</sup>

## POTENTIAL PROJECTS BASED ON FRIENDLY RELATIONS

### REGIONAL LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS (LNG) MARKET

As Japan's foreign policy overcomes regional tensions, one project that will shrink the Asia LNG premium is a regional LNG market. The current LNG spot price for Asia stand at 16 dollars per million British thermal units, astronomically higher than British (10 dollars) and American (2-3 dollars) hub prices.<sup>62</sup> European and American natural gas markets demonstrate that an integrated regional market will generate enough competition to eliminate the premium on imported gas.<sup>63</sup> The Asia-Pacific LNG market, however, is not well developed; the market is characterized by long-term contracts and high prices due to Northeast Asia intra-competition.<sup>64</sup> Chang and Li have hypothesized that the competitive partial

equilibrium model of an integrated Asia-Pacific natural gas market will greatly decrease the price Japan pays for natural gas and reduce Northeast Asian countries' reliance on the Middle East.<sup>65</sup> The Middle East supply would be replaced by intra-region trade and this would in turn lower transportation costs for Asian consumers. This model illustrates that Northeast Asian countries can reach their goals of cost reduction and diminishing Middle East reliance by establishing an integrated LNG market in Asia.

### PIPELINE SHARING

Pipeline projects require deep commitment and abundant monetary resources. Pipelines themselves are also cumbersome and expensive to maintain. Yet pipelines can deliver oil and gas in both directions efficiently and effectively. Through joint investments in maintaining/improving existing pipelines, Japan, China, South Korea, and Russia can transport more energy throughout the Northeast Asia region, reduce the maintenance/construction costs, and share the risks of possible pipeline failures. The following are some proposals on pipeline cooperation: 1) Japan and South Korea should utilize Chinese pipelines to obtain Central Asian oil and gas. China can use the Turkmenistan-China Gas Pipeline to bring the energy resources to Horgos, utilize the West-East Gas Pipeline to bring them to Shanghai, and then ship them to Japan and South Korea. 2) Japan and South Korea should aim to bring Kazakh oil to Northeast Asia using the Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline. 3) Japan, China, and South Korea should work with Russia to bring more natural gas to Vladivostok, taking in Sakhalin gas using the Sakhalin-Khabarovsk-Vladivostok Pipeline and Siberian gas using the Power of Siberia Pipeline. Since Japan does not have a national pipeline to connect its islands, these proposals are especially advantageous to Japan because Vladivostok gas can supply Japan's north and Shanghai gas Japan's south. Pipelines should be maintained/advanced cooperatively so that they will benefit all parties at a lesser cost.

### METHANE HYDRATE

Methane hydrate, found off of Japan's east coast, is a crystalized ice structure that contains methane gas. This possible energy source exists both on top of and hundreds of meters under the sea floor.<sup>66</sup> While having vast energy potential, methane hydrate development is costly and has high environmental risks. The EIA has found that high development costs may halt Japan's production plans.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, methane hydrate extraction may cause the seabed to collapse and the methane gas to be released directly into the atmosphere (causing terrible environmental damage). Despite the costs and risks, warming relations can open the prospect for Japan, China, and South Korea to explore this possibly rich energy source. By working together, they can draw from the efforts of all three countries' scientists to develop methane-capturing technology more quickly and efficiently. This cooperation would also share the risks of a failure and raise sufficient capital for the three countries to embark on this groundbreaking endeavor.

### REASONS FOR COOPERATION

#### INCREASED ENERGY SECURITY: INCREASED SUPPLY, COST REDUCTION

##### *INCREASED SUPPLY*

Through foreign policy and diplomacy, these countries can cooperate to strengthen their efforts in diversifying energy supplies and creating alternative energy sources (e.g. methane hydrate). The projects mentioned above will moreover decrease their reliance on the Middle East by finding new energy supply sources (e.g. pipeline sharing, natural gas market). They can reduce their vulnerabilities to supply disruption and price fluctuations through their strengthened bargaining power.

##### *COST REDUCTION*

By cooperating and bargaining collectively,

Japan, China, and South Korea can restrain suppliers' market power, eliminate restrictions to more flexible energy trade, and reduce energy cost in future energy contracts.<sup>68</sup> For example, through collective bargaining, they will have stronger market power to negotiate prices with ASEAN countries, Russia, and Australia. Without intra-regional competition, countries like Russia will not be able to manipulate China and Japan against each other to raise bids for Russian oil and gas.<sup>69</sup> Lastly, by creating a natural gas market, they can increase supplier competition and receive better rates for their energy sources.

#### ACCESS TO JAPANESE NUCLEAR/ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

Access to Japanese energy technology is a strong incentive for South Korea and China to cooperate with Japan on energy projects. China's 2011 Five-Year Plan highlights its energy priority of carbon dioxide emission reduction, and South Korea's Low Carbon Green Growth Strategy lists nuclear energy as a pillar of its alternative energy strategy.<sup>70,71</sup> Japan is a recognized world leader in conservation and nuclear technology, and the Japanese government can help China with environmental protection and South Korea with energy security.<sup>72</sup> Japan's foreign policy can undertake nuclear diplomacy and use Japan's technological prowess to coerce China and South Korea to cooperate with Japan on other energy projects. Japan, too, can benefit from this cooperation by working with Chinese/South Korean nuclear experts to create safer nuclear energy generation measures and more environmentally-friendly nuclear waste disposal procedures. Their technological collaborations can not only reduce greenhouse gas emission, but also generate trust and a cooperation culture between them.<sup>73</sup>

Within the current regional paradigm, Japan, China, and South Korea unnecessarily compete to secure the same resources when they can cooperate to more easily achieve energy security. From their cooperation, they can also advance energy conservation, nuclear



power safety measures, and environmental measures. The current challenge at hand is for foreign policy to increase multilateral communication and discover how to “turn energy into a source of regional cooperation and integrated markets rather than national competition and politicized markets.”<sup>74</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Japan’s energy policy and foreign policy intersect significantly. Japan, as one of the main energy importers, prioritizes energy security. Japan’s energy policy, particularly Tokyo’s goal of enhancing energy security, has seriously influenced Japanese foreign policy. Japan has previously approached foreign policy from an energy policy perspective, often working with Middle Eastern energy-supplying states to buttress bilateral relations. Nevertheless, as Japan transitions away from Middle Eastern energy, Japan should let foreign policy drive energy policy and approach resource diplomacy from a new viewpoint. That is, it should let foreign policy delve into matters that may not be energy-related in order to open doors to new opportunities to enhance energy security. By adopting this new form of resource diplomacy and resolving territorial disputes, Japan can collaborate with China, South Korea, and Russia to augment energy security and improve energy cooperatives in Northeast Asia. Mutual understanding and communication are pertinent to these diplomatic breakthroughs, and confidence-building mechanisms/institutions are necessary to maintain warming relations and coordinate these countries’ energy policies.

Yet, many challenges await. One major obstacle is the United States. The U.S. may not appreciate Japan, its close Asian ally, having warm relations with two of America’s greatest rivals, Russia and China. In addition, the U.S. may worry that increased natural gas from Russia will adversely impact American LNG exports to Asia. Another hurdle comes from within each Northeast Asian country. Persistent nationalistic sentiments and historical grievances and anger may prove to be more difficult for diplomacy to resolve

than territorial disputes. The hawkish foreign policy behaviors that Xi, Putin, and Abe have demonstrated also raise the question of whether the heads of these states will want to work together. This, however, does not mean that government officials, civil society, and private businesses should shy away from this foreign policy challenge. The time has come for Japan, China, South Korea, and Russia to look past their historical differences and recognize the overwhelming benefits that come with bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

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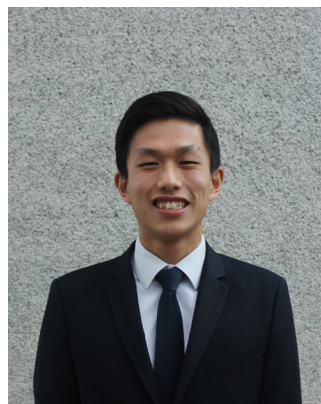
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## AARON HUANG



SENIOR  
BAKER COLLEGE

ASIAN STUDIES  
& ECONOMICS &  
POLICY STUDIES



## EDITOR

**AARON HUANG**  
SENIOR, BAKER COLLEGE  
ASIAN STUDIES, ECONOMICS &  
POLICY STUDIES

Aaron is an aspiring Foreign Service Officer who is interested in East Asia and human rights. The only thing stronger than his desire to pursue a career in diplomacy and Chinese politics is his passion for boba and sushi.



## EDITOR & WEB MANAGER

**AVERY JORDAN**  
JUNIOR, WIESS COLLEGE  
ASIAN STUDIES & COMPUTER SCIENCE

Avery is interested in learning about bridges between American and Chinese cultures. He anticipates Chinese technology companies becoming even more globally relevant and foresees computer science and Asian Studies being a critical juncture in his future career.



## EDITOR

**TAYLOR GINTER**  
SENIOR, WIESS COLLEGE  
ASIAN STUDIES, MATH MINOR

Taylor is interested in exploring other cultures through texts and travel (she has been to 12 countries) and is currently learning Mandarin. In her free time, she enjoys shooting film photography, playing tuba, and petting dogs.



## EDITOR

**CONNIE YICHEN ZHANG**  
ALUMNA, 2017, BAKER COLLEGE,  
ASIAN STUDIES & CHEMICAL  
ENGINEERING

Connie describes herself as a STEM girl who just can't give up her love for Asian Studies including literature, culture, history, film, drama, arts, and food.



## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**JACKSON NEAGLI**  
ALUMNUS, 2017, BROWN COLLEGE  
ASIAN STUDIES & POLICY STUDIES

Jackson is interested in Chinese law and governance, and how China's internal political dynamics color Beijing's interactions with other states in the international system. He is particularly drawn to Chinese conceptions of energy security.

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